

# RAPSEED

## COVER CROP FACT SHEET FOR IOWA

**Rapeseed** (*Brassica napus*) is a fast-growing brassica often used in cover crop mixes to help fight soil compaction, capture residual nitrogen, and help with water infiltration.



Cisco Farm Seed

### Identifying Features

- » Kidney-shaped cotyledons
- » Leaves with distinct veins
- » Undulated leaf
- » Leaves are waxy and hairless

### Cultural Traits

- » Cool-season/winter annual brassica
- » Minimum germination soil temperature: 41° F
- » Cold temperature tolerance: 0° F
- » Seeding date: Early August to Mid September\*

### Planting Information\*

- » **Drill/Plant** at ¼ - ½ inch (3 lbs./acre PLS\*\*)
- » **Broadcast** (3 lbs./acre PLS)
- » **Aerial** (4 lbs./acre PLS)

\*Planting information from Midwest Cover Crop Council ([midwestcovercrops.org](http://midwestcovercrops.org)). Refer to local NRCS office recommendations (Iowa Field Office Technical Guide, Section 4, 340 Cover Crop) for seeding dates and rates pertinent to location specific financial assistance program requirements.

\*\*Pure Live Seed

### Additional planting information:

- » ~160,000 seeds/lb.
- » Rapeseed and canola are the same species, but their oils have different chemical makeups. Do not use glyphosate-resistant varieties.
- » Broadcasting without incorporation is less dependable than drilling.



Rapeseed Seed



Rapeseed sprouts



Rapeseed leaves in a mix.



Rapeseed popping through the soil.

### C:N (Carbon:Nitrogen) Ratio

- » Rapeseed 12:1 to 37:1

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Rapeseed sprouts through the soil.



Rapeseed blooms yellow in a cover crop mix.

## Performance

Dry matter = 1,000 - 2,500 lbs./acre per year  
(Biomass quantity is dependent on planting and termination dates and precipitation.)

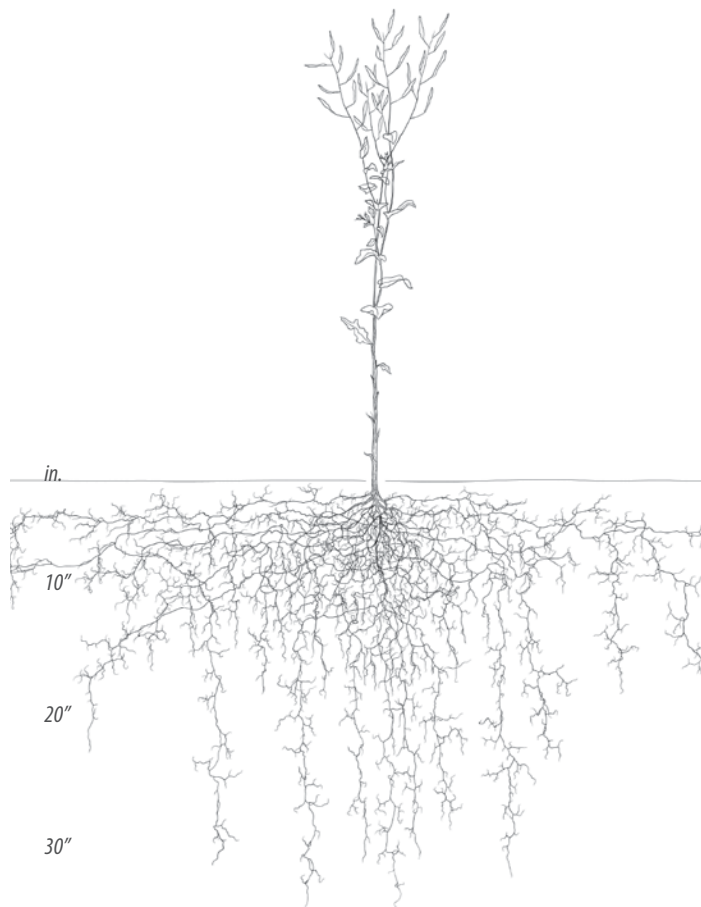
### Performance Ratings

» Cash crop interseed ( <i>early vegetative</i> )	Good
» Cash crop overseed ( <i>late seed fill</i> )	Good
» Grazing quality	Poor
» Mechanical forage harvest	Poor
» Nitrogen fixer	NA
» Nitrogen scavenger	Good
» Weed suppression	Good
» Compaction fighter	Very good
» Erosion control	Fair
» Lasting residue	Fair
» Quick grower	Good
» Drought tolerance	Good
» Low fertility tolerance	Good
» Shade tolerance	Good

## Additional Considerations

- » Should not be used in rotations with other brassicas.
- » May help reduce rhizoctonia in some cropping systems.
- » May become a serious weed if allowed to go to seed.
- » Does not tolerate ponding.
- » Rapeseed produces a natural herbicide called glucosinolate, which reduces weed germination.

## Rapeseed Plant and Root Structure



Drawing provided by Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative ([ccsin.org](http://ccsin.org))

This fact sheet is a collaborative effort of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to provide cover crop options and information for Iowa landowners.