**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.

### 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). 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.

### C:N (Carbon:Nitrogen) Ratio
- Rapeseed 12:1 to 37:1
RAPESEED COVER CROP FACT SHEET

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 (early vegetative) Good
- Cash crop overseed (late seed fill) 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)

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.

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