

# TRITICALE

## COVER CROP FACT SHEET FOR IOWA

**Triticale** (*Triticum x Secale*) is a deep-rooted cool-season/winter annual grass that resembles wheat and cereal rye. The plant looks like wheat, but the awns resemble cereal rye. (Photo by Jason Johnson)



### Identifying Features

- » Blunt and sometimes hairy auricles
- » Leaf sheaths and blades are typically hairy
- » Medium length ligule

### Cultural Traits

- » Cool-season/winter annual grass
- » Minimum germination soil temperature: 38° F
- » Cold tolerance temperature: -20° F (W) 20° F (S)
- » Seeding date: Mid August to Late October\* (F)\*\*\*
- » Seeding date: Late March to Late April\* (S)\*\*\*

### Planting Information\*

- » **Drill** at ¾ - 1½ inches (45 lbs./acre PLS\*\*)
- » **Broadcast** (50 lbs./acre PLS)
- » **Aerial** (55 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

\*\*\*W=Winter S=Spring F=Fall

### Additional planting information:

- » ~13,000 seeds/lb. (1 bushel = 50 pounds)
- » Increase seeding rate when planting on slopes or using triticale for forage/grazing.
- » When interseeding triticale, time seeding to match appropriate growth and maturity.
- » Broadcasting without incorporation is usually less dependable than drilling or broadcasting with incorporation.



Triticale Seed



Seedling



Mature



Cover crop grass growth comparison

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

- » Triticale 20:1



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Triticale in a vegetative stage.



Triticale is part of this 12-species cover crop mix. (Brandon O'Connor)

## Performance

Dry matter = 2,000 - 5,000 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> )	Excellent
» Grazing quality	Excellent
» Mechanical forage harvest	Excellent
» Nitrogen fixer	NA
» Nitrogen scavenger	Excellent
» Weed suppression	Very good
» Compaction fighter	Good
» Erosion control	Excellent
» Lasting residue	Excellent
» Quick grower	Very good
» Drought tolerance	Good
» Low fertility tolerance	Very good
» Shade tolerance	Good

green bridge or nitrogen tie-up are a concern. For crop insurance compliance, follow NRCS cover crop termination guidelines.

- » Early season nitrogen applications can help reduce the effects of nitrogen tie-up by the cover crops.

## Additional Considerations

- » Triticale could increase the risk of black cutworm and armyworm; risk of green bridge increasing pythium seedling disease; and is a host for penetrans root lesion nematode.
- » Time cover crop **termination** based on goals and experience level. To reduce potential negative impacts on cash crops, consider terminating earlier in the season when conditions are dry or when



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.