

FORAGE CABBAGE

COVER CROP FACT SHEET FOR IOWA

Forage Cabbage (*Brassica carinata*), also called African or Ethiopian Cabbage, is a quick growing cool season annual brassica excellent as a cover crop in a grazing mix. Forage cabbage also provides good soil erosion control.



Identifying Features

- » Hard, erect stems
- » Large, broad leaves
- » Waxy, coated, hairless leaves

Cultural Traits

- » Cool season annual brassica
- » Minimum germination soil temperature: 45° F
- » Cold tolerance temperature: 20° F
- » Seeding date: Early August to Late September*

Planting Information*

- » **Drill/Plant** at ¼ - ½ inches (2-5 lbs./acre PLS**)
- » **Broadcast** (2-6 lbs./acre PLS)
- » **Aerial** (not recommended)

*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.

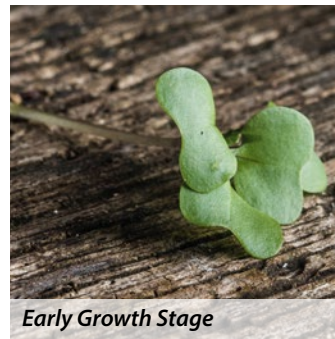
**Pure Live Seed

Additional planting information:

- » ~180,000 seeds/lb.
- » Increase seeding rate when planting on slopes or using for forage/grazing.



Forage Cabbage Seed



Early Growth Stage



Forage Cabbage Leaves



Forage cabbage stems bloom yellow flowers.

C:N (Carbon:Nitrogen) Ratios

- » Forage Cabbage cover crop 14:1 to 25:1

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Forage cabbage before flowers bloom.



Cattle graze a cover crop mix that includes forage cabbage.

Performance

Dry matter = 200 - 4,000 lbs./acre per year
(Biomass quantity is dependent on planting and termination dates and precipitation.)

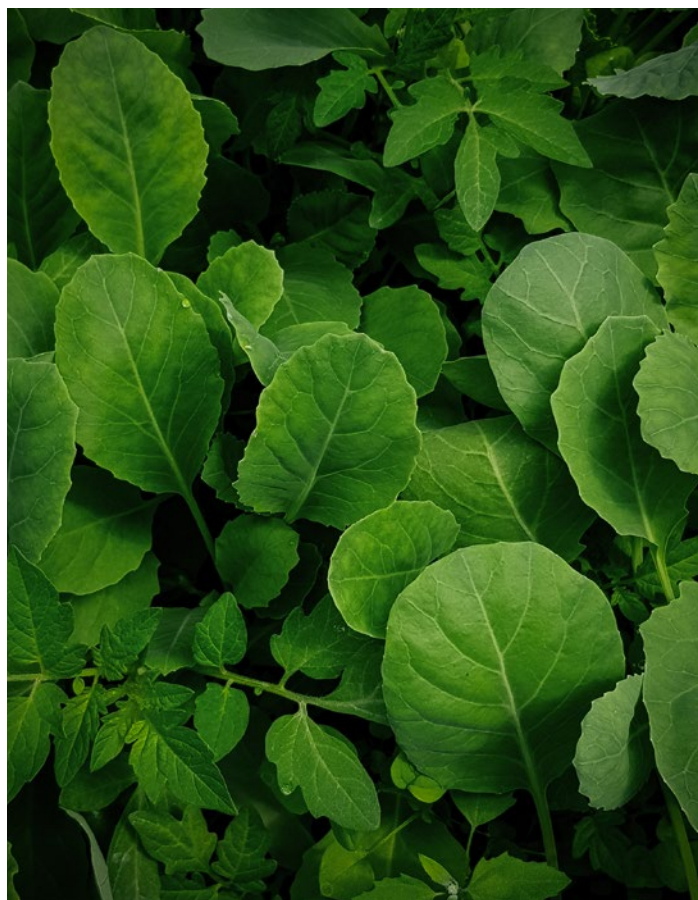
Performance Ratings

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

Additional Considerations

- » High glucosinolates interfere with mineral metabolism.
- » Use in a cover crop mix to avoid nitrate poisoning and glucosinolate issues.
- » Nitrate poisoning is possible if fed as a single species to livestock. Use in a cover crop mixture to avoid potential problems.
- » Stiff upright growth increases potential to trap snow.

Forage Cabbage Leaves



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.