Canola

Canola can be planted either spring, summer or fall. Canola is highly desirable after tree leaf drop. Plant 5 to 7 lbs. with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24 per acre. Plant remains upright in snow.

Dwarf Essex Rape

Rape is similar to canola and is an excellent winter food. It stands very well to heavy snow. Plant 5 to 7 lbs of seed with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24 per acre.

Rutabaga

Plant in loose soil around July 4 through early August. Use ½ lb. of seed per acre with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24. Deer will feed on both the tops and the tuber. This is an excellent winter food.

Grain Sorghum (milo)

Grain sorghum is a close relative to corn with similar nutrients and energy. Plant 30 to 50 lbs. of seed as early as possible in the spring following the last frost. Plant 70 to 80 days maturity seed for best results.

Food plots do not need to be large. One half acre to two acres is optimum size. Ideally, food plots should be located close to cover with irregular shaped boundaries. If the food plot is in an open or hardwood area, consider planting some conifers along one edge.

Don't be afraid to experiment with different forage crops. Wildlife do best with a variety of food.

Soil testing is an excellent management tool. Soil test boxes are available from Alpena MSU Extension or the Montmorency Conservation District for a cost of $12.00.

For additional information, on wildlife habitat and forest management assistance, call the **Alpena Conservation district** at **989-356-3596** or the **Montmorency Conservation District** at **989-785-4083.**

All District programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis.

Forage Crops for Deer

Compiled by
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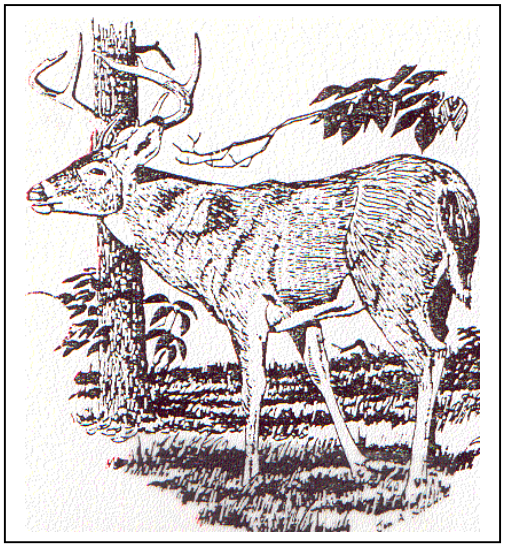
Forester



Alpena and Montmorency Conservation District

For all of the following forage plantings, it is understood that the planting area is free of grass and weeds with a soil texture that will allow soil to seed contact. Some soil tillage will be necessary.

Roundup is excellent for controlling grass. Apply to actively growing grass and weeds. Wait 3 to 4 days before tillage.

All seed and fertilizer rates are for 1 acre.

Wheat

Wheat for deer feed should be planted by September 1. Planting by this date should allow good growth for fall and spring feeding. Plant 120 lbs. per acre with 300 lbs. of 12-12-12 fertilizer. Cover lightly.

Rye

Rye will grow on any soil. On sand soil plant by mid august. On loam planting can be delayed until September 1. Plant 100 lbs. seed per acre with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24 fertilizer per acre. On sandy soil, split the fertilizer application between fall and spring.

Buckwheat

Buckwheat should be planted after June 1. Plant 50 to 70 lbs. with 100 lbs. of 16-16-16 per acre. Both the plant and seed are food.

Oats

Oats should be planted in the spring by mid May. Plant 120 lbs. per acre with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24. Oats are an excellent cover crop for alfalfa and clover.

Ladino Clover

Ladino clover is excellent feed during early spring and late fall. Very high in vitamin C. Ladino clover will tolerate a wide range of soil. Plant 12 lbs. per ac. with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24 per ac. Can be planted either spring or fall (August). Works well planted with oats. Ladino clover grows very well in shade and stays green after heavy frosts. Mow after July 15 to encourage new growth.

Bird's Foot Trefoil

Trefoil is an excellent forage crop for moist to wet areas, Very slow to become established but will remain viable for a long time. Mow mid August to scatter seeds. Plant 10 lbs. per ac. with 200 lbs Can be planted spring or fall.

Alfalfa

Alfalfa is excellent forage from late spring through early fall. Turns brown after hard frost and becomes less desirable as food. 12 lbs. of seed with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24 per ac. Plant during spring or late summer.

Purple Topped Turnips

Purple topped turnips or brassica excellent forage for deer. Plant ½ to 1 lbs. per ac. With 200 lbs. of 6-24-24. Plant last week of July to first week of August. Cover lightly. Use corn meal as an extender when broadcasting and cover light. Excellent choice to follow oats and to plant in small openings.

Corn

Corn is an excellent food because it stands good during the winter and is high in energy. Corn does best when 3 or more acres are planted. Smaller acreage is normally destroyed before the plant can set the cobs. Weed and grass control is very important and necessary. Herbicide use after planting will be necessary. Plant 20,000 seeds per ac. with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24 and 100 lbs. of 46-0-0. Corn is very expensive to plant and needs to be planted with a corn planter.

Soybeans

Soybeans are easier to plant than corn and are highly preferred by deer, turkeys, geese and ducks. Seed can be broadcast. Plant 60 lbs. of seed with 200 lbs. of 6-24-24 per acre. Select a short season variety and plant after last frost of the spring.