



The Farm at Miller's Crossing
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Week of August 10th 2008 farmatmillerscrossing.com



Head lettuce just planted

FROM THE FARMERS...

Though we are in the middle of the 2008 season the execution of the 2009 season has begun. We have determined where next years crops will be planted and are now planting the cover crops in their appropriate locations.

Some cover crops die over the winter, some stay alive and begin growing as soon as the temperatures rise in the early spring. Some crops like hairy vetch and peas fix nitrogen from the air and bring it into the soil. Oats, rye, and wheat grow well in cool weather and prevent the invasion of weeds and add organic matter when plowed down. The list of benefits of each variety of cover crop fills volumes, but the basics are as follows.

We use the different qualities of these cover crops to our advantage depending upon the needs and timing of the next crops. All of our spring planted crops will go into ground that we are seeding oats and peas into. The oats and peas will die over the winter and provide us with easy tilling ground for our early spring crops.

The ground that will be for our fall vegetable crops will be seeded down into rye. The rye over-winters very well and after it heads up in late May, we will combine it for the grain and then harvest the straw for mulch. We will then have time to incorporate the residue into the soil and let the soil microbes break it down into an available nutrient for veggies in the fall..

Crops that we seed and plant in early June (tomatoes, sweet potatoes etc) could be in either oats and peas, or in rye. The rye would have to be plowed in early before it heads up in order to have it adequately broken down before veggies are planted. The oats and peas will die-off over the winter and be well broken down for June planting.

Why do all this planning? Spend all this time & money on cover crops? Because of the many benefits. Cover crops keep soil in its place during the winter when flooding and run off can take our valuable top soil down stream. Cover crops have extensive root systems that catch and hold soil nutrients in the top layers of the soil where they will be available for future crops. Some cover crops give off natural chemicals that inhibit the growth and germination of weeds. Seeded thickly, cover crops out-compete weeds and therefore "clean" the soil for the next crop. Like most things in life, there is no "easy way" to farm. A good growing season is usually determined by the previous season's hard work and investment

Here's to good planning...for this year, and for next.
Katie

SOON TO COME....

HEIRLOOM TOMATOES
&
Red Onions