

CRESCENT SUNN

(CROTALARIA JUNCEA/SUNN HEMP)

Crotalaria juncea belongs to the legume family which has a dual use, the main one as a green manure and the second one as fodder. It is a crop that should be planted when freezing conditions are over and temperatures are around 20oC. It is not very demanding in terms of soil quality, but gives a better yield in sandy soils. Water requirements are not very high.



Advantages of using Crescent Sunn

as a green manure

- Short cycle (6 to 8 weeks), which makes it a very interesting crop for intercropping
- Low water requirements
- Rapid decomposition of the green matter
- Supply of organic matter to the soil
- Nematicide effect

as forage

- Short cycle
- Low water requirements
- Excellent palatability for animals
- High dry matter yield
- Control of broadleaf and narrowleaf mono and dicotyledonous weeds

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ESTABLISHMENT

- Prepare a good seed bed and after sowing, roll to compact the soil and ensure good soil contact with the seeds.
- Before sowing, inoculate the seeds with *Bradyrhizobium* rhizobium to enhance not only the establishment of the crop, but also the development of nodules on the roots.
- Do not store inoculant at temperatures above 25 °C.
- Inoculation can be done in the seed drill hopper. Moisten the seeds with a sprayer and add the prescribed dose of inoculant. Mix well to fix the inoculant evenly on the seeds (the seeds should not stick together) and sow immediately.
- Sow in neutral or slightly acid soils for best results.
- Crescent Sunn prefers filtering or well drained soils.
- Use a sowing rate of 35 to 40 kg per hectare for green manure use and 50 kg per hectare for forage use.
- Broadcast with a fertilizer spreader or cereal seed drill or a precision seed drill. It is also possible to use the direct drilling technique.





USE AS A GREEN MANURE

Crescent Sunn is very suitable for use in vegetable growing areas as a green manure in intercropping. Due to the high biomass production and nitrogen (N) fixation from the atmosphere, it is ideal for supplying organic matter to the soil and nitrogen to the next crop. It can also be easily introduced into sustainable production systems.

Crescent Sunn can fix as much as 200 N units per hectare. This high binding capacity of N is due to the nodules on its roots. This allows it to satisfy its own needs and the residual nitrogen is available for the next crop.

The incorporation of green matter into the soil plays an important role in maintaining or increasing soil fertility by protecting or improving its structure, stimulating biological activity and allowing a better availability of nutrients for the next crop. This is especially important for sandy soils.

In heavier soils, the incorporation of green matter stimulates biological activity and therefore increases soil porosity and facilitates drying and aeration. The end result is a less compacted soil of better quality.

Finally, another advantage of Crescent Sunn is its nematicide effect. It reduces soil nematodes (parasites) and thus improves crop yields.

It is recommended to cut and incorporate the entire plant 8 weeks after establishment.

USE AS FORAGE

On the other hand, Crescent Sunn produces good quality forage with a good protein content. It provides 5 to 7 tons of dry matter per cut per hectare in a 6 to 8-week cycle. One aspect to highlight is its great palatability, forage is very well consumed by cattle, goats and sheep. It can be used to produce hay and silage.

It is recommended to harvest at the beginning of flowering when 10% of the plants are in bloom: this is the best balance between quantity and quality of fodder.

Whatever the use, care should be taken to minimize leaf loss during mowing and harvesting, as leaves are richer in crude protein than stems.

FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **It is an unparalleled source of nitrogen (green manure) and protein (fodder)**
- **Reduces soil nematodes substantially**
- **Production of 25 to 30 tons of green matter with rapid decomposition**
- **Produces up to 200 nitrogen units per production cycle**
- **Forms a vegetative cover that limits erosion**
- **Reduces the use of chemicals**
- **Improves the physical and chemical characteristics of the soil**
- **Increases the yield of the following crops thanks to residual nitrogen**
- **Short production cycle (6 to 8 weeks)**
- **Production of 5 to 7 tons per hectare of dry matter per production cycle**
- **High protein content**
- **Very palatable forage for animals**
- **Multiple uses: hay, silage and green manure**



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