

COVER CROP: PEAS AND OATS

Pisum sativum and *Avena sativa*



A mix of winter peas and oats.



Young florets on an oat plant.



Pea flowers have a mild flavor, popular for salads, garnish, and natural dye.



PEA SHOOT PESTO

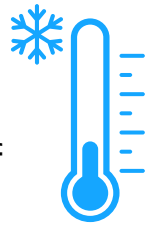
1. Place 1 cup peas, 2 cups fresh pea shoots, 2 cloves garlic, salt, pepper, and 2 tsp. lemon juice into the bowl of a food processor.
2. Pulse a few times until everything is coarsely chopped.
3. While the food processor is running, slowly stream in 1/3 cup olive oil and blend until everything is incorporated into a smooth pesto.

Benefits:

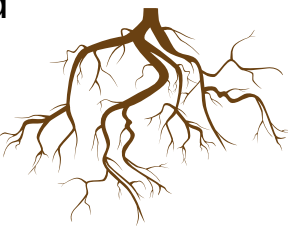
Oats act as a “nurse crop” for peas; their high stalks give the peas something to climb.



Some choose oats and peas because of the convenience of a ‘winterkill’ cover crop



The roots of growing pea plants fix nitrogen into the soil, feeding the oats, which produce organic matter in their leaves.



The carbon to nitrogen ratio in oats and peas invigorates the soil and accelerates decomposition.

TIME LINE

AUG - NOV PLANTING

Broadcast a 30% oat and 70% pea seed mix by weight in the Fall. Cover to protect from wildlife.

OCT - NOV ESTABLISHMENT

Peas & oats planted in the fall will grow quickly in the months before first frost.

DEC - FEB WINTERKILL

When temperatures drop, and are consistently 20°F, peas & oats should “winterkill,” meaning the cold terminates the established plants.

MAR-JUNE NEW GROWTH

In a 21st Century NYC winter, peas and oats will likely survive and begin to put on new growth as soon as the temperature warms.

APR-JUNE TERMINATION

When it's time to plant Spring or Summer crops, cut the peas & oats down. You can work the residue into the soil, add it to the compost, or lay it on top of the soil as a mulch.

MAY - JUNE SOIL BENEFIT

Field pea residue breaks down quickly and adds a lot of nitrogen to the soil. Oat vegetation contributes carbon.

SUMMER MULCH

The plant residue will retain moisture & suppress weeds, acting as a mulch for summer crops in your garden bed.

