Naracoorte Seeds
Keeping Seed Simple

A Guide to Vineyard Inter-Row Establishment & Varieties

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Servicing the South East of South Australia & the Western District of Victoria since 1962

www.naracoorteseeds.com.au
Introduction

It has been our pleasure to produce this brochure for vineyards looking to incorporate inter-row cover crops to help with the management of vineyards. We have chosen several options that we believe could help with the different objectives & environments that we come across in these areas. The planning, selection and management of cover crops in the vineyard system can become an extremely vital tool. With Naracoorte Seeds, we will always be available to discuss your long and short term objectives to help you reach your long term sustainability and productivity.

Benefits of Cover Crops

The benefits of cover crops are varied depending on the sward you use. Each vineyard has different characteristics and needs to be assessed individually. Once you have pinpointed the requirement needed, we can then advise the best sward to use. Some of the major long term benefits of cover crops include:

- Improved soil structure and reduced soil compaction
- Reduced run off with greater water infiltration
- Reduced evaporation
- Improved nutrient retention from increased levels of organic matter
- Suppression of weed population
- Potential attraction of beneficial pests
- Reduced wind and water erosion
- Improved trafficability /access of rows
- Reduced heat damage to crops
- Assist with vine devigouration

Preparing Your Seed Bed

Well prepared seed beds with the right planning and preparation will provide optimum conditions for seed germination, plant establishment and growth. A poorly prepared seed bed will promote poor seed germination and allow weeds to take over. Some of the main points are:

- It is important to use implements that will not overwork the ground. For example, a rotary hoe pulverises the soil. Working with an offset disc, harrow or scarifier is preferable.

- A key aspect is correct soil firmness. With proper seed bed firmness, the optimum planting depth may be achieved that will place the seed unit in soil that will remain moist and is near enough to the surface to allow seedling emergence.

- Sowing depth is crucial. Ensure you don’t sow the seed to deep or shallow or you will risk a very poor establishment. Small seeds should be sown between 10-15mm, while large seeds should be sown at 20-30mm.

- Absolute weed control must be the ultimate aim of any seed bed preparation. This could be achieved via a combination of a non-residual herbicide and using the appropriate cultivator. Advice may need to be sought in this instance.
**Suppressor Blend**

The Suppressor Blend is suited to a wide range of soil types and is a blend of summer dormant fescue, perennial ryegrass and cocksfoot. As its name suggest, it acts as a very good weed suppressant with the ryegrass establishing itself quickly in spring to compete with weeds, giving the other varieties time to establish themselves. Once established they will then take over to help suppress any existing weed base. The Suppressor Blend is also perfect for our harsh summer conditions with the summer dormant fescue and the cocksfoot have the ability to endure the toughest times of moisture stress.

Other benefits for planting Suppressor Blend are:

- Good organic matter production which could be side shoots under the vine area to be used as mulch.
- Strong root system will improve soil structure
- Won’t creep into under vine
- Good mowing quality
- Wind and rain erosion control

**Seeding Rate: 20 - 25 kg/ha**

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**Cocksfoot**

Cocksfoot is an ideal choice if you are looking for an easily maintained & long term inter-row. Where you are looking for a 20+ year inter-row that only needs modest amounts of chemical (giving you long-term savings) and has the benefit of being drought tolerant, this could be an ideal option. Cocksfoot is a flexible variety that will grow on heavy water logging soils or light sandy soils and will not creep into vines.

**Seeding Rate: 15 kg/ha**
Lucerne

Lucerne is a deep rooted species that is a highly effective water user. It can have a major benefit for assisting in vigour control as a lucerne inter-row will compete with the vines for water and nutrients. This competition can be ideal if you are looking for a cover crop to assist with vine devigouration. This can also have a positive effect on fruit quality. Another benefit is that it is well suited to soil that may have a slight water logging issue and therefore can allow traffic on land where it may have been too wet.

Other benefits for planting Lucerne are:

- Improved soil structure
- Reduces erosion with strong root system holding soil together
- No ongoing annual sowing costs
- Grazing can become an option to help diversify income streams

Seeding Rate: 15 - 20 kg/ha

Perennial Grasses & Legumes

This blend is a similar mix to your Suppressor Blend with an extra ingredient to add nitrogen fixation to the soil. It will produce good organic matter which could be side shoted into the under vine area or mowed and left to add organic nutrients back into the soil.

Other benefits for planting Grass & Legume Blend are:

- Strong weed suppressant
- No annual re-sowing of mid rows required
- Improved trafficability and erosion control
- Improves soil structure

Seeding Rate: 15 - 20 kg/ha
Biofumigation Blend

Biofumigation blends are ideal in light sandy soils where soil borne pests and nematodes are a problem. The Biofumigant swards consist of Brassica species, Rape, Radish and Mustards, which contain glusocilinates, that will break down once incorporated into the soil and have the ability to suppress nematodes and other soil born pests and diseases. To receive the greatest benefit from this blend you need to work the sward into the soil when the crop is around 5-10% flowering. This is best done with a couple of passes with offset discs. Once ploughed, the paddock must be watered well and kept moist to take full effect. For a comprehensive guide please call Naracoorte Seeds.

Seeding Rate: 10 kg/ha

Crimson Clover

If you are looking for a cover crop that will give great aesthetic appeal, crimson clover is perfect. It may be you are looking to add a prestigious presence to your cellar door entrance or just add some colour to the odd inter-row to catch people’s eye. Crimson clover is a self-regenerating annual legume with a deep rooting characteristic that does not require the resowing of inter-rows. Some added benefit of crimson clover is that it will add nitrogen to the system through nitrogen fixation.

Seeding Rate: 10 kg/ha

Please remember this brochure only highlights a small selection of cover crop we offer. If you are looking at something outside what is highlighted or are unsure what cover crop would best suit your area and soil type, we encourage you to give us a call to discuss the various options available.

For more information on the enclosed swards or any other blends/varieties please contact your seed specialist Naracoorte Seeds.