

## No Till Food Plot Seed

No Till Food Plot Seed - Hancock Seed Company the originators of the no-till food plot concept began providing no-till food plot mixtures for hunt clubs in 1980. Over the years we have perfected many different mixtures of premium seeds which can be no-till planted for food plots.

No-till planting is just what the name implies. Seeds are broadcast over existing vegetation without disturbing the soil. This method eliminates the need to bring machinery to remote areas to cultivate the soil for the traditional planting method. Another advantage of no-till is the transition from a summer food plot to a fall winter food plot can be accomplished without disturbing the existing summer food plot. By simply over seeding the summer food plot in with the cool season seeds and allowing the deer to actually help press these seeds into your existing food plot you have extended your food plot for several more months without tillage.

No-till seeds are generally very small seed types that are not easily found by birds, turkeys and other wildlife until after germination. Large seeds such as corn, peas, sunflowers etc. are not well suited for no-till as they can be consumed by wildlife before germination. However, clovers, millets, greens, etc. are very small and are suitable for no-till planting.

With no-till planting you are able to establish many small food plots in very remote areas and increase your buck harvest potential. Select areas with low vegetation, adequate moisture, and sunlight. Partially shaded areas receiving at least four hours of sunlight per day is sufficient. The reason for selecting areas with low vegetation is because emerging seedlings need sunlight energy to grow. If these little plants emerge in deep grass they can't receive the needed sunlight for survival and usually will die. If you no-till your seeds into grasses, do so in early spring before the grasses begin actively growing. This will allow your no-till seeds to germinate begin growing and keep their heads above the grasses so to speak. Many no-till plants grow very successfully intermixed with native grasses. When you lime and fertilize your no-till plants you are also doing so to the native plants which many times are beneficial to wildlife as forage.

### Traditional Tilled Food Plot Seed

In areas where you can get necessary farm equipment to cultivate the soil and prepare a seed bed one can plant a variety of seed types. Tilling the soil destroys the existing vegetation and loosens the soil so the food plot seeds have little or no competition for available nutrients and moisture.

When planting the traditional way be careful to not cover the seed too deep. Spread your lime, fertilizer, and seed before you go back over the field to cover the seed. This reduces the possibility of covering your seed too deep. If the cultivated field is very soft you would be wise to just drag a bushy limb over the field to cover the seed rather than use a cultivator to incorporate the seed and fertilizer. If you have a successful summer food plot deer are using when it is time to plant your fall/winter food plot you might consider using the no-till method to spread these winter seeds into your existing food plot. This way the deer will help press the seeds into the ground while still browsing the summer plants. Also, if you were to plow up your summer plot and plant the winter seeds you have disrupted the deer feeding pattern and they will move on to other areas to feed. They may possibly come back after the fall crop begins growing unless they have found something better while waiting for your next crop.

There are some disadvantages to traditional tilled plots besides the need of farm equipment. One is that plowing up soil sets you up for soil erosion from wind or water. A heavy rain shortly after planting could possibly wash your seeds down a hill if there is a slope. Breaking up the sod allows moisture to escape and could be detrimental to your seedlings if you don't get a rain shortly after planting. Sometimes plowing up an area you expose undesirable weed seeds to the top of the soil and they will germinate and possibly compete with your food plot species.

### Summary

You can have a successful food plot using either of these methods. Of course even professional farmers have crop

failures. Drought, flood, insects, disease, feral pigs, over grazing, are all possible causes of a failed food plot. However, by planting several small food plots as opposed to one or two large food plots you increase your odds of having a successful food plot experience. Also, do not think you have to have a beautiful weed free food plot. You are not farming the crop for a profit you are growing this for wildlife. Your wildlife could care less what it looks like they are more interested in the nutrition. Also, remember many native weed species are very beneficial to wildlife and you will be surprised how many of these native plants will be a favorite of the wildlife especially since they have been fertilized.

A more detailed explanation of food plots can be obtained from:

## THE SOUTHERN FOOD PLOT MANUAL

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