



SOUTH BERKSHIRE FARM BULLETIN

COVER CROPS

As we are busy harvesting our garden and field crops, we should take into consideration the bare soil we are leaving exposed to the harsh elements for the next 6-7 months. The planting of a cover crop is an important conservation measure that should be taken by the backyard gardener as well as the larger crop farmer.

Soil erosion is perhaps the most obvious problem that cover crops help with. Our soils are being washed away at an alarming rate. Over in the Connecticut River Valley where the land is used for row crops year after year they are losing about an inch each year. Here in the hills much of our crop land is on hill sides or in low lying areas that flood easily. The roots of the cover crop hold the soil in place; the tops help to slow down the water flow across the surface of the soil.

Nutrient loss is an equally important problem. Our often sandy soils leach nutrients rapidly. Cover crops help in three ways. They use a lot of the nutrients that would otherwise be washed away and store them in the form of plant material. Their root systems slow down the water movement over and through the soil thus lessening the leaching. When incorporated back into the soil, cover crops increase the organic content of the soil thus increasing its water and nutrient holding capacity.

Winter rye is perhaps the most common choice of a cover crop as it grows well in the fall, has a vigorous root system and will make a good growth in the spring giving you a good amount of organic matter to add to your soil. Its drawback is its robust spring growth. It is often hard to deal with if you are putting an early crop in the ground. Oats are an alternative. They also make good fall growth but the tops winter kill in about February leaving you a mat of dead "grass" on the surface, however the root system is still helping to hold the soil

in place.

The usual cut off date for seeding these things is September 15th. Even if you are a little behind schedule, try to get something growing on that bare soil soon.

SEEDS FOR THOUGHT

We would like to encourage everyone to contribute to the South Berkshire Farm Bulletin by starting an information exchange column. We'd like to hear from anyone who has had good or bad luck with a certain vegetable variety, cultural technique, animal variety, marketing experience, piece of equipment, etc. Send your contribution to SHARE-croppers, Box 345, Monterey, MA 01245.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Wanted: Bio-dynamic grains: winter wheat, spring clear, and rye. High season usage: one short ton weekly. Will pay top price. Village Bakery, 159 Main St., Philmont, NY. (518) 672-7131.

Wanted: Horse-logging team to hire. 229-7748.

Wanted: Up to 1500 lbs. organic onions, 100 lbs organic beets for winter storage. 528-1737.

Wanted: Logging tractor, skidder and log truck. 528-2272.

Wanted: Reasonably priced glass, windows, sliding glass doors, etc. to be used for temporary green house. Contact Julie or Glenn. (518) 672-7164.

For Sale: Horse drawn mowing machine on rubber presently set up for use with tractor. 5' mow bar. 528-2138.

Quality colored fleeces and lambs. Rose Sheep Farm, P.O. Box 298, Great Barrington. 528-0656.

Experienced orchardist will prune and manage fruit trees, mow fields and brush, set and repair fencing, cut trees and clear. Has tractor and can generally advise and implement work on your garden, orchard or fields. John Ingersoll. 528-0620.

Workshop on perennial agriculture, permaculture techniques, led by John Quinney of New Alchemy Institute. October 2nd at Flying Cloud Institute, New Marlborough. \$12 non-members, \$7 members. Call 229-2593 for information.

Local apples by the lb., peck, bushel as they ripen. Fresh cider without preservatives. Squash, pumpkins, etc. Local vegetables. Corn Crib, Rte. 7, Sheffield.

For Sale: Milking Goats, 1 Nubian, and 1 Toggenburg. Also, kids. Ernest and Ruth Ferguson. 637-3085.

For Sale: Hay, Straw, Rye Seed, direct from Riverhill Farms, Great Barrington. 520-0828.

Custom Wool Carding. Rose Carding Company. 528-9387.

Stud Service Available: Purebred French Alpine Buck out of GCH 4*M, sired by CH buck. Service fee includes dehorning of doe kids. Rawson Brook Farm. 528-2138.

Stark Bothers fruit and nut trees. Ward's Nursery, Rte. 7, Great Barrington. Open 9-5. Pure Maple syrup and hay for sale. The Ripleys, Corner Farm, Beech Hill Rd., Blandford. 357-8829.

For Sale: Mulch hay, \$1/bale. Fat lambs \$1/lb. Finn-Dorset Ram, \$150. John Deere wooden sided, ground driven namure spreader with rubber on wire wheels, excellent condition. 229-7924.

Herbs and our own herb products. Country Herbs, Stockbridge. 298-3884.

For Sale: 5 week old French Rouen Ducks and fresh Jersey butter available. 229-7748.



E. F. Schumacher Society
Box 76, RD 3 Great Barrington, MA 01230 413-528-1737

A full line of natural foods is complimented by fresh local fruits, herbs and vegetables at Berkshire Coop Market, Rosseter St., Great Barrington. Call 528-9627 to sell your produce.

Farm Fresh Produce. UCF feeds and grains. Lee Farm Supply, Rte 102, Lee. 243-2544.

Seeking partner to share established Lodging House, separate 3 BR cottage, barns, studio, out-buildings. 15 acres including 6 acres locust and wood, 6 acres pasture with stream, small orchard, etc. \$25,000 down, \$75,000 makes you a full partner. (518) 392-2775.

Tractor mounted rototilling, plowing and firewood skidding. Vincent Scutellaro. 528-9244.

Pick your own apples from trees that have never been sprayed. \$10/bushel. 528-9181.

SHARE Benefit Auction and Bake Sale, Oct. 11th, 1:00 PM, Beapre, Rte 7, Stockbridge. Donations and consignments now being collected. Items include farm and garden equipment and services. Call 528-1737 with items to list. All auction items should be over \$20. Remember to open your SHARE Savings Account at the Great Barrington Savings Bank. While earning interest for the depositor, SHARE accounts are used to collateralize loans for local food and energy production.

BULLETIN SUBSCRIPTIONS

After this issue we can no longer afford to send copies to people who have not subscribed. The Bulletin is published 6 times a year. Subscribers are entitled to one free ad per issue with a \$1 fee for additional ads. They must be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication -- October 15th for the November issue. Subscription cost is \$5 payable to SHARE-croppers, Box 345, Monterey, MA 01245.

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