

*Brassicas*

# Rapeseed

## AS A COVER CROP IN OHIO

This fact sheet summarizes information specific to Ohio that is available from the Midwest Cover Crops Council. For more information, see the *Midwest Cover Crops Field Guide, Third Edition*, and the Cover Crop Selector Tool found at: [midwestcovercrops.org/selector-tool/](https://midwestcovercrops.org/selector-tool/)

Individuals participating in financial assistance programs are required to follow NRCS Appendix A regarding seeding rates and dates. Failure to do so will jeopardize payments. Appendix A can be found in Ohio's Field Office Technical Guide, Section 4, Ecological Sciences Tools: <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/OH/documents/section=4&folder=-6>

### Planting Information

- Drilled at ¼–½ inch
  - 1–4 lbs./acre (pure live seed)
- Broadcast with shallow incorporation
  - 2–4 lbs./acre (pure live seed)
- Broadcast without incorporation
  - 3–4 lbs./acre (pure live seed)

#### Additional planting information:

- 157,000 seeds/lb.
- Do not use glyphosate-resistant varieties.
- When planting on slopes or using for forage/grazing, increase seeding rate.
- Broadcasting without incorporation is usually less dependable than drilling or broadcasting with incorporation.

### Performance

- Dry matter yield = 1,000–2,500 lbs./acre per year
  - Biomass quantity is highly dependent on planting/termination dates and precipitation.

**Nitrogen scavenger:** Very good

**Soil builder:** Good

**Erosion fighter:** Very good

**Weed fighter:** Very good

**Grazing:** Very good

**Quick growth:** Very good

**Lasting residue:** Good

**Cash crop interseed:** Excellent

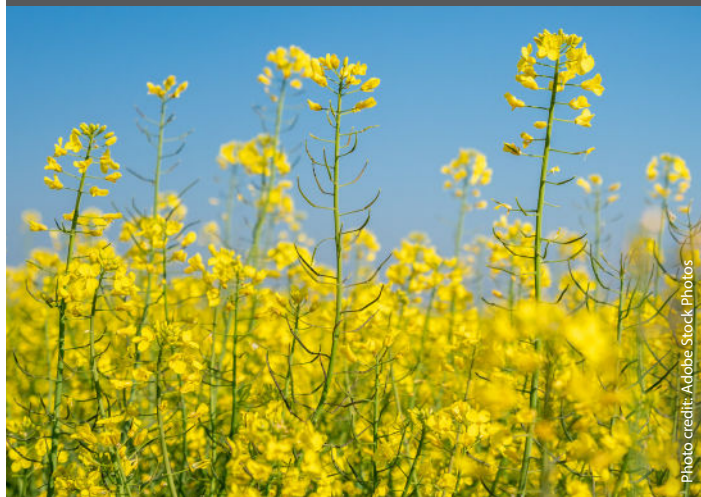


Photo credit: Adobe Stock Photos

### *Brassica napus*

#### Identification Information

- Small, yellow, four-petaled flowers on vertical stems
- Narrow leaves at top of plant with larger lobed leaves toward the bottom
- Strong taproot with fibrous lateral roots
- Rapeseed and canola are the same species, but their oils have different chemical makeups; rapeseed has at least 45% erucic acid content, whereas canola has usually less than 2% erucic acid.

#### Cultural Traits

- Winter annual
- Minimum germination temperature: 41°F
- Reliable establishment window (state average): July 25–Oct. 19
- Upright growth habit: 3–5 feet
- Preferred soil pH: 5.5–8.0

**Heat tolerance:** Good

**Drought tolerance:** Good

**Shade tolerance:** Good

**Low fertility tolerance:** Good

**Winter survival:** Varies based on specific variety



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**Termination Information**

- Tillage
  - If terminating with only tillage, multiple passes are often required.
- Chemical
- Winterkill
  - Winter survival varies based on specific variety and conditions.

*Additional termination information:*

- Kill or till-in at least three weeks before planting cash crop.
- There is a moderate weed potential if not completely terminated.
- Follow NRCS guidelines for cover crop termination dates for crop insurance compliance.

*Additional performance information:*

- Should not be used in rotations with other brassicas
- May help reduce rhizoctonia in some cropping systems
- May become a serious weed if allowed to go to seed
- Does not tolerate ponding

**Potential Advantages**

*SOIL IMPACTS*

<b>Subsoiler:</b>	Very good
<b>Compaction fighter:</b>	Very good
<b>Nematodes:</b>	Very good
<b>Disease:</b>	Good
<b>Allelopathic:</b>	Very good
<b>Chokes weeds:</b>	Very good

*OTHER*

<b>Attracts beneficials:</b>	Very good
<b>Short windows:</b>	Good

**Potential Disadvantages**

**Delayed emergence:** Could be a minor problem

**Increased weed potential:** Could be a moderate problem

**Increased insects/nematodes:** Could be a minor problem

**Hinders crops:** Occasionally a minor problem

**Mature incorporation challenges:** Occasionally a minor problem

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*(Note: This publication was adapted with consent from MCCC with content from the Midwest Cover Crops Field Guide, Third Edition, and Cover Crop Selector Tool: [midwestcovercrops.org/selector-tool/](http://midwestcovercrops.org/selector-tool/).)*

The Midwest Cover Crops Council ([www.midwestcovercrops.org](http://www.midwestcovercrops.org)) aims to facilitate widespread adoption of cover crops throughout the Midwest by providing educational/outreach resources and programs, conducting new research, and communicating about cover crops to the public.

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