

Wildlife Food Plot Project



Let the Growth Begin

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By now you should see signs of growth in your food plot, provided you have had enough rain to germinate the seeds. It typically takes 7-10 days once the seed has germinated for there to be visible signs of your plants, depending upon the depth the seeds were planted and the moisture level of the soil. In dry conditions it will take longer to see results but in most cases you will see growth once your plot receives adequate moisture. If your plot is near a water source feel free to supplement the rain fall as needed, although it should not be necessary. If you have concerns about your food plot contact your local Extension Agent for help.

If your food plot did not do well this year do not be discouraged. While we all strive for a very successful food plot that will supplement the nourishment requirements of the wildlife in the area, the goal for this project is not for you to grow the biggest and best food plot; it is for you to learn life skills and responsibilities. The record book is designed for you to record what you have learned. Sometimes we receive our best lessons when the results are not what we expected. Regardless of how your food plot is performing, you should still complete the record book to the best of your ability, allowing you to compete for prizes with your peers.

You can expect wildlife, especially white tail deer, to start using your food plot shortly after the seed have sprouted from the ground. The seed mix provided by [Wannamaker Wildlife](#) has been designed to provide optimal attraction for both deer and turkey and will also serve many other animals, such as, but not limited to, rabbits and other birds. The blend of seed includes oats, wheat, frost proof peas, radish and dwarf essex rape. We will look at each of these seed closer inside of this newsletter.

While you are enjoying the rewards of your hard work, be sure to make notes and keep your record book updated as you go along.

Dates to remember:

- January 9 - deadline to return completed project record books to Extension Office
- Nov.-Dec.—Site Visit from Extension Agent. They will schedule with you.



?? So What Was in the Larger Bag ??

Naked Oats



What is it about naked oats that makes them “naked”? Don’t worry, you will not have to close your eyes when you go check on your food plot. Naked Oats get their name because when the seed mature they do not have a husk. A husk is the protective layers that is found on conventional oats.

There is a rising demand for naked oats in the markets for birdseed, pet foods, and animal nutrition. They are high in fiber, nutritious and gluten free. The nutrient-dense grains provided by naked oats deliver high energy and this makes them a great addition to your wildlife food plot. Naked oats make up 45% of the large bag of seed you received.

Forage Wheat



Forage winter wheat is an excellent source of nutrition during the winter months due to its cold-hardiness. It also produces a lot of forage. Forage is the word we use to describe plant material (mainly plant leaves and stems) eaten by grazing animals such as livestock and deer. Forage wheat seed that is produced when the plant matures packs a whopping average of 14% protein content. This is great for the wildlife that will be utilizing your food plot.

It also produces a large amount of leafy material deer and wild turkey love. The wheat will grow rapidly at first, then slow down when the cool winter months arrive. As soon as Spring gets here it will continue its rapid growth and help provide great habitat. Depending on soil conditions and moisture, wheat can grow to as high as 4 feet... maybe higher. Forage wheat makes up 35% of your large bag.

Frost Proof Peas



Frost proof peas are a great source of nutrition for wildlife. They are a low growing, vine like legume that produces a good tonnage of very appetizing forage. Legume is a word we use to describe plants that produce a dry fruit contained within a shell or pod. The most well known legumes are peas, beans, peanuts and alfalfa. They are cold-hardy and capable of out producing most other varieties of peas.

Frost proof winter peas have a lower level of tannin. Tannin is a compound that creates a bitter taste in plants. If you have ever tasted a persimmon that is not quite ripe, you have a good idea of what tannins can do to flavor. Since the plant is lower in tannin the deer prefer it because it is sweeter.

Frost proof peas make up approximately 20% of the seed in the large bag you planted. Even though they are the lowest percentage of seed, due to their vining like qualities you will see that they will be just as prominent as other seeds that were planted.

?? What was in the Small Bag ??

Lunch Radish

“Lunch” Radish was bred for soil health, forage, and vegetable production. It has a high nutrient load. It produces high quality forage along with a superior deep taproot for tillage. Lunch radish has significantly more forage with highly palatable fairly smooth leaves that are significantly darker green due to more chlorophyll production in the leaves. The word “palatable” means enjoyable, pleasant, or appetizing. In other words... radishes taste good.

This radish also has the combination of a deep penetrating taproot for loosening your soils and mining more nutrients and bringing them to the surface for the next crop. The root is very straight and more uniform in shape than the typical tillage type radishes.

Lunch Radish makes up about 49% of your small bag you planted.



Dwarf Essex Rape

Dwarf Essex Rape is a succulent, cabbage-related plant that will persist well after the first frost. You will have noticed that the seed are very small. In fact, there are an average of 145,000 seeds per pound. That is a lot of seeds!!!

Dwarf Essex is an extremely tasty, high-energy, high-protein forage crop for winter grazing by livestock and deer. Fast germination and growth also make this ideal for weed suppression, reducing surface compaction, and winter cover.

It prefers a well-drained soil with a pH range of 5.5-8.3 . Dwarf Essex Rape makes up 49% of the small bag you planted.



Wait a Minute... The Math Seems a Little “Fuzzy”

If you did the math right above, you will notice that both the radish and rape were both listed at 49% of the total seed for the small bag. Added together, that is only 98%... Not 100% as you would expect!! If you noticed on your label, the bag of seed is said to possess 98% Purity. This is quite good but still doesn't tell you what is contained in the other 2% .

The total purity of a lot is composed of Pure Seed, Inert Matter, Weed Seed, and Crop Seed. All four of these numbers must total 100%. Pure Seed is the % of the sample that contains fully formed seeds, that from visual appearance are not damaged. This is the radish and rape seed in the bag. The other 2% is composed of a combination of Inert Material (things such as sand, dirt, trash... basically anything that is not seed), Weed Seed (just what it says... seeds for weeds), and Crop Seeds (mature, sound seeds of OTHER CROPS).

Another important number on the label is the germination. Our seed is listed at 80% Germination. Basically, what this means is that if growing conditions are favorable, we can expect 80% of the seed to grow.



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“To Make the Best Better”

WE WANT TO SEE YOUR PICTURES

In the next issue of our newsletter we would like to highlight YOU and YOUR Food Plot. Please send photos with a short caption to one of the following emails. By submitting you agree that we may use the photos in our publication

Steve Hucks
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or

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Links to Good Sources of Information

Simply click on any of the below links to go straight to the website

If you need assistance accessing any of these pages / information, your local Cooperative Extension Office 4-H Agent will be glad to help.

[Project Homepage](#)

[QDMA](#)

[Rack Pack](#)

[Wannamaker Wildlife](#)

[How to build an Exclosure Cage](#)

[Find My County Extension Office](#)

[Wildlife Habitat Information Sheet](#)

[Developing a Wildlife
Management Plan](#)

[Back Yard Wildlife Enhancement
Informational Sheet](#)