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Vetch

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service
Purdue University
Agricultural Extension Service
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VETCH
Agronomy Department

Hairy or Winter Vetch. Hairy vetch is commonly called Winter Vetch, sometimes Sand, Russian or Siberian Vetch. Its scientific name is Vicia villosa. It is not grown to any extent in Indiana. Availability of seed, slow spring growth, its weak stem and difficulty in curing the hay have discouraged its use. It is the best adapted to a cool temperature climate though it is fairly winter hardy and is drought resistant. It prefers sandy or sandy loam soils but will do well on almost any well drained soil. The shattered seed has produced fairly good volunteer crops for several years on the Sand Field near Culver when harvested with the binder with rye for seed.

Vetch is usually sown at the rate of 30 to 40 pounds per acre seeded alone or 20 to 25 pounds sown with rye or other small grain. It should be seeded in August or early September. Inoculation is very important.

It is usually used for hay, or ensilage purposes. Its slow growth in fall and early spring hardly justifies its use with rye as a winter cover crop except for late spring plowing which permits more top growth.

Yields in Indiana have been light. The price of seed has tempted a few growers to harvest a seed crop. The seed usually ripens in July. Because of its shattering habit, it is liable to become a weed pest in wheat when harvested for seed as it volunteers freely. Millers object seriously to vetch in wheat. It has not yielded as well as soybeans for hay. It tangles badly if growth is heavy and requires some time for curing.

Smooth or Common Vetch. Common or smooth vetch is an annual, sometimes called Tares or English Vetch. Its scientific name is Vicia sativa. It is grown most extensively in the Pacific Coast states. It is ordinarily sown in the spring. It requires a cool growing season but cannot withstand low temperatures. The climate of the Corn Belt is too hot for it in midsummer. It requires a rather well drained soil and does well on loams and sands. Inoculation is very important.

It requires a firm seed bed and may be seeded alone with the grain drill or with oats. It is less desirable than winter vetch for use in Indiana.

Other Vetches. Wild vetches are rather common. A number of other vetches have been reported, none of which are of economic importance.

Soybeans More Desirable. The two vetches discussed above are those of chief economic importance and from the discussion it is evident that annual vetch has little place in Indiana and that the winter vetch has not been successful enough to encourage use by Indiana farmers. Farmers desiring an annual legume for hay purposes will find soybeans or possibly cowpeas most logical to use.