

Food Plot Ideas For Wildlife



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The acres that didn't get planted this year provide a good opportunity to plant cover crops and wildlife plots. Many people have been asking what crops they can plant. If you are interested in wildlife plots, there are many options.

Turnips and clovers will provide good food supplies if planted now. Planted this early, they will do well and provide a significant amount of forage. The turnips will also provide a winter food supply as animals dig the bulbs and eat them all winter.

Spring oats provide some good cover and food until they freeze out, which occurs when temperatures get in the low 20s – and that has been quite late some years. In this area, we also have winter oats that over winter well.

Soybeans work as a nutritious food supply. If planted now, they will never mature, and they will keep growing until temperatures drop into the 20s. Deer will often feed heavily on the soybeans right up until deer season.

Ryegrass is another forage crop that can establish quickly and provide a high-protein, palatable forage for much of the winter. It can be mixed with clovers like Ladino, crimson, Persian or red clover. In the last few years, our plots of crimson clover have done well and have survived until spring. If you are not familiar with crimson clover, it is a winter annual that grows all winter, blooms in the spring, and then dies. Crimson clover also fixes a lot of nitrogen that can be utilized by the corn or milo crop next year. How much nitrogen? That depends on the stand, density and how long it grows in the spring. But, it has shown to provide about 75 pounds per acre most years and over 130 pounds per acre this last year. If the clover is a food plot, then plant corn in these areas next year after the spring hatches. Turkeys and quail will use these areas next spring to raise their young. Deer and turkeys really like these clovers and will use them all winter.

When you have the opportunity, share the wildlife watching with kids. This time in the outdoors is also a good opportunity to introduce youth to hunting. Δ

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