

Abruzzi: A Giant Cover-Crop Rye

Not all rye varieties or true breeding lines are created equal. Maybe you have been planting a rye-cover for years only to be disappointed with a short statured and untillered stand. Well it is time to select a rye giant. Abruzzi is a giant or tetraploid cultivar of rye, capable of growing two feet taller than a standard cereal rye variety. Abruzzi is also a true breeding line, which allows seed to be saved from year to year with minimal genetic trait loss. With care, a one-time investment in certified Abruzzi rye for your farm could make available for years a prolific cover capable of seven-foot fully tillered canopies.



Certified Abruzzi rye is not cheap; expect to pay 12 to 14 dollars per bushel. Plant enough certified rye to generate seed for fall cover cropping. Generally in Southern Maryland, Abruzzi is capable of 50 bushels/Acre yields when sown in the fall prior to late October at a seeding rate of 2.25 to 2.5 bushels/Acre. Be sure to treat the seed with a planterbox fungicide treatment, and fertilize the field with 20 to 40 lbs of nitrogen in the fall. Amend the phosphorus

and potassium levels into the optimum range. In late February top-dress the rye with an additional 30 lbs of nitrogen and add the herbicides .5 pt/A 2,4-D Amine + .25pt/A Banvel[®] 4E for winter annual broadleaf control if required. Rye will generally be ready to combine at the same time as wheat.

Rye planted for cover-crop use is generally sown at a seeding rate of 1.5 to 1.75 bushels/Acre; therefore, it will require 3 to 3.5 acres of combine rye to produce seed for 100 acres of cover crop. As the cover crop cost share program becomes implemented on the Western Shore of Maryland it may pay to be a certified Abruzzi rye producer for your own needs as well as the needs of others.

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