



Sunn Hemp

Crotolaria juncea

Sunn Hemp is a relatively new cover crop. Seed availability and cost became reasonable about 2016. This tropical legume was not much tested in northern climates like New York earlier. It has proven to grow very well during the heat of summer. Sunn hemp produces a lot of biomass and can grow over 7 feet tall.



<i>Land preparation</i>	Smooth seedbed, well-drained but with adequate moisture for germination. Minimum-tillage works well.
<i>Seeding rate</i>	Drill 15 lb/ac; if terminated early (at 60-70d), 25 lb/ac. Plant 1/2-3/4 inch deep. Can be planted with 15 lb/ac sudangrass or sorghum-sudangrass.
<i>Seeding date</i>	The range of seeding dates has not been determined for New York. Plant into warm soil, with enough warm season left. Mid-June to mid-July should be successful. Later if terminated at flowering.
<i>Seed sources</i>	Integrity Seeds (Global Sunn), Hancock Seed.
<i>Maintenance</i>	Little maintenance necessary.
<i>Control</i>	Terminate either at flowering (~60-70 d), while stalks are still tender. Or allow to winter kill and let the very fibrous stalks decompose.
<i>Tips</i>	Use in a mixture with sudangrass. The sudangrass serves as a nurse crop and stimulates nitrogen fixation. They will both resprout if mowed to ~1 foot once they are 2-3 feet tall. Mowing delays fibrous stems. Use a cowpea/peanut inoculant each year. Don't try to mow the fibrous stalks after flowering.
<i>Benefits</i>	Amount of nitrogen fixation has not been determined for New York (short season, high fertility). A non-host of root-knot nematode ¹
	Sunn Hemp is not related to sunflowers or to hemp.

References:

¹Wang, K.-H., B. S. Sipes, and D. P. Schmitt. 2002. *Crotalaria juncea* as a cover crop for nematode management: A review. *Nematropica* 32:35-57.

²Integrity Seeds production guide

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Disclaimer

This fact sheet reflects the current (and past) authors' best effort to interpret a complex body of scientific research, and to translate this into practical management options. Following the guidance provided in this fact sheet does not assure compliance with any applicable law, rule, regulation, or standard, or the achievement of particular discharge levels from agricultural land.

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For more information



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