

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPECIFICATION

COVER CROP (Ac.) CODE 340

PURPOSE OF SPECIFICATION

This Specification provides guidance for the installation of the practice Cover Crop. Guidance may include information about applying different methods listed in the Conservation Practice Standard, details of site preparation and protection, instructions for use of materials described in the Standard, and other information not directly addressed in the Standard.

Site specifications for the installation, operation and maintenance of the practice shall be prepared for each treatment unit in accordance with the requirements in the Conservation Practice Standard and the guidance in this Specification. Site specifications shall be recorded in the Conservation Practice Jobsheet and given to the client.

SPECIES SELECTION

Information about plant species suitable for use for this practice in Hawaii is included in the Hawaii Vegetative Guide, available online at: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/HI/pub/technotes/vegetative/>.

Planners in other Pacific Islands Area locations, may use the Hawaii Vegetative Guide, however they should also consult the NRCS Pacific Islands Area Plant Materials Specialist and/or State Agronomist to verify plant species selection.

Where more than one species is to be seeded, reduce the seeding rate for each species in proportion to the number of species in the mixture.

ESTABLISHMENT

By Seeding

Site Preparation. Site preparation shall consist of rototilling, plowing, ripping or disking. Prepare a firm seedbed. Use no-till seeding methods and equipment, where practicable.

Planting. Seeding may be accomplished by either broadcasting or drilling.

Where seed is broadcast, dragging the area with a chain, or light plank will help to ensure good soil-seed contact. Shallow disking or rototilling is also effective.

Depth of seeding depends on seed size, soil moisture and soil texture. Plant seeds deeper when soil moisture is low and shallow when moisture is abundant. Large seeds are generally planted deeper than small seeds. A general recommendation is to plant at a depth equal to four times the diameter of the seed.

Where topography permits, site preparation and planting shall be done on the cross-slope or contour to minimize the erosion hazard.

Adequate moisture is critical for successful planting. Plant only after the rainy season has begun or provide irrigation until the plants are well established.

By Vegetative Method (Stolons, Sprigs, or Rhizomes)

Site Preparation. Site preparation shall consist of rototilling, plowing, ripping or disking. Prepare a firm planting site. Vegetative material should be evenly distributed on the site and disked in.

Planting. For a more positive placement of the vegetative material, site preparation may be followed by plowing furrows at a maximum depth of 6 inches. Vegetative material is then placed in the furrows. Cover the material with soil by disking, or other suitable means, in the direction of the furrow; then compact lightly to ensure good plant-soil contact.

Dense plantings will produce a quicker stand of grass with fewer weeds. Unless planting material is limited, make the furrows about 3 feet apart and place the stolons, sprigs or rhizomes as close as practicable in the furrows.

Where topography permits, site preparation and planting shall be done on the cross-slope or contour to minimize the erosion hazard.

Adequate moisture is critical for successful planting. Plant only after the rainy season has begun or provide irrigation until the plants are well established.