



Grow a Bumper “Under-Cover” Crop

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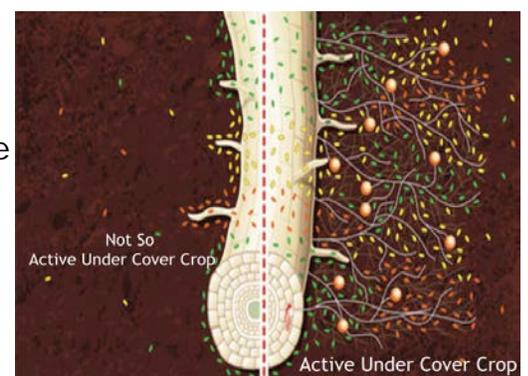
Signs of life are popping up everywhere. The grass is greening up, the leaves are popping out, flowers are blooming, and soon the crops will be emerging. That combination sure paints a brilliant picture to the eye, doesn't it? But have you ever considered the life underneath our feet?

The life underneath our feet is probably the single most overlooked aspect in farming today. Yet, is probably one of the most important keys to success in biological farming. Success begins when plants fully cooperate with nature.

Cooperation begins in the rhizosphere where “under-cover” crops or soil microbes live and work. It is here that the roots of the above-ground crop interact with the living soil microflora or under-cover crop. A biologically active rhizosphere encourages plant growth by producing vitamins, antibiotics, plant hormones, and communication molecules.

There are many steps in establishing an abundant and diverse under-cover crop. A great beginning is to inoculate the soil with living organisms. We have found the following biological products to work best:

- **Myco Seed Treat (MST)** — This dry blend of beneficial bacteria and fungi contains a nutrient package to support the under-cover crop during establishment. It contains



Mycorrhizae fungi, which increases root area, absorbs phosphorous and microscopic water, builds soil structure, and attracts other microbes. It provides a beneficial zone of microbes surrounding the seed.

- **SP-1** — This liquid formula supplies bacteria, fungi, and algae. It includes carbon substrates, vitamins, and minerals which support the growth of microbial life. It should be used at all stages of crop growth and establishment (including foliar).
- **Residue** — Proper residue management can improve soil tilth and seedbed establishment. Residue also promotes the breakdown of phytotoxic compounds, and provides less immobilization of nutrients for the next crop. When applied in conjunction with nitrogen and sulfur fertilizers, Residue can accelerate plant residue breakdown and nutrient re-cycling.

Picture the soil biology as an orchestra, with each different family of microbes playing a specific role. As long as each section has the right number of players, the melodies and backgrounds harmonize. We like to think of **SP-1** as the conductor of the biological symphony.

Remember, to maintain an active biological community, it is important to always have something growing. This will help mitigate fallow periods and drastic changes in soil pH and active under-cover crop populations.

If you have questions about under-cover cropping don't hesitate to give one of our knowledgeable sales agronomists a call at **(815) 872-1190** or check out our website www.agrienergy.net to listen to the complete under-cover crop presentation from our January 2015 Seminar.