



# TECH-NOTE

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## BRASSICAS FOR SUMMER FODDER

Strategic planting of forage brassica crops can provide a source of productive, high quality fodder for filling feed gaps over summer, finishing off young stock or as a break crop prior to renovating run down pastures. As with most forage crops, sowing costs are usually high and there is an element of risk associated with sowing them, results will depend on rainfall received during the growing period along with other key management factors.

Other key factors that will affect the success of brassicas are listed below:

- Brassicas will do best on fertile, well drained soils. Any nutrient shortages need to be addressed at sowing
- Results will be improved with good paddock preparation (cultivation for conventional sowing or knockdown herbicides for direct drilling)
- Sow at a depth of 1-2 cm into an even, firm and moist seedbed
- Seed treatment, such as Gaucho, will help protect seedlings from Red Legged Earth Mite at emergence
- Monitor plants regularly for insect pests including RLEM and Lucerne Flea through to a range of grubs and caterpillars
- Access to run off paddocks or alternative feed sources (such as hay and silage) and the ability to subdivide paddocks for strip grazing. Introduce stock slowly over a number of days
- Seek advice in regard to livestock health issues that may arise from grazing brassica crops.
- *There is a growing trend toward mixing some of the forage brassicas, in particular Winfred forage brassica, with herbs such as Chicory and Plantain. This adds to the versatility and flexibility of the forage crop. (An example would be Winfred 3kg, Tonic plantain 1kg and Grouse chicory .5kg per hectare).*

There are several varieties available, with a range of maturities to choose from. Select a variety that will mature when you most need the feed. Planting is best carried out in the early spring from September onwards. This will make the best use of available soil moisture and good growing conditions.

Variety	Sowing Rate	Sowing Time	Feed Available	Time to Maturity	Variety Characteristics
Winfred	3-5 kg Per Ha	Spring & Autumn	Summer & Winter	8-12 weeks	Cross between Turnip & Kale. Drought tolerant. Early Maturity. Cold tolerance allows for autumn sowing and winter grazing. Multiple grazings.
Ace	3-5 kg Per Ha	Spring & Autumn	Summer & Winter	12-14 Weeks	Rangi replacement
Rangi	3-5 kg Per ha	Spring & Autumn	Summer & Winter	12-14 Weeks	Older variety. Now outclassed. Provided economical alternative to better performing varieties. Certified seed is getting harder to source.
Maxima Plus	3-5 kg Per ha	Spring & Autumn	Summer & Winter	10-12 weeks	Replacement for Rangi. Improved animal acceptability over Rangi. Good aphid resistance. Drought tolerant.
Goliath	3-5 kg Per ha	Spring & Autumn	Summer & Winter	12-14 Weeks	Tall erect, suitable to cattle grazing
Hunter	3-5 kg Per ha	Spring & Autumn	Summer & Winter	6-8 Weeks	Hybrid type (Chinese Cabbage x Turnip). Quick feed. Reduced bolting, quality held for longer. Multiple grazing and recovers quickly after each grazing.
Pasja	3-5 kg Per ha	Spring & Autumn	Summer & Winter	6-8 Weeks	Hybrid type (Chinese Cabbage x Turnip). Needs to be grazed when ready as palatability falls off. Multiple grazing.

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