

Creating the ultimate... *autumn sown brood-rearing cover*



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Often people struggle to create cereal-sown brood strips in the spring, as they find it difficult to get onto wet ground or perhaps experience dry conditions, resulting in poor growth. Also, especially for early hatching pheasant broods in May, the spring grown cereal component has just not grown enough to provide a decent overhead canopy to protect chicks from avian predators.

Planting brood-rearing cover in the autumn can be much simpler, as the whole field can be cultivated and then the headland strip planted into the same fine seedbed as the main crop is due to be drilled.

For more expert advice please contact us on 01425 651013 or go to www.gwct.org.uk/advisory.

The cereal element will grow away in the spring and produce good cover regardless of whether or not the spring is dry. The important weed element will also be well established and attract a good range of insects for the chicks to consume.



There are a couple of minuses to autumn-sown cover, namely blackgrass and sterile brome. These grass weeds mainly germinate in the autumn and can be a nuisance among the broad-leaved weeds that we want. Allowing a flush of grass weeds and then spraying off with glyphosate prior to planting your cover will help.



Top tip
Sow your brood-rearing cover on wide width, perhaps taking out every other row

It is also important to rotate headland strips to stop a build-up of grass weeds.

