



## Sugar Beet Planting Instructions

These recommendations can be helpful if you are considering sugar beets as a supplement in your food plot.

1. Planting Food Plots: Optimum soil temps of at least 55° F. Plant soon after the danger of a killing frost is over.

\*Spring Planting: Early April – Early June depending on location.

2. Sugar beets prefer a heavier loam or clay soil. Condition the soil with a disc, chisel plow or similar equipment to prepare a good seed bed as early as possible so weeds have a chance to begin growing. Spray with Roundup two weeks before planting.
3. Drag the seed bed with a drag or chain link fence to further prep the soil.
4. Soil should be fertile with a pH of 6.5 to 7.5. If you are not sure of your soils fertility or pH, have your soil tested. Your local farm co-op or fertilizer dealer can usually help with this.

\*A good fertilizer recommendation is 300-400 lbs of 19-19-19 followed by an application of 100lbs/acre of urea (46-0-0) after 6-8 weeks

5. Broadcast 8-10 lbs or drill 5-8 lbs sugar beet seed per acre. If broadcasting, lightly incorporate seed into the soil with a drag or light cultivator. This rate can be reduced proportionately if blended with Alfalfa, Clover or other seed.
6. Simply set the broadcaster to 2 on most spreaders or about ¼ inch (better to have setting set smaller and overlap than to run out of seed).
7. Drag the seed bed and cover the seed with ¼ - ½ inch of top soil.
8. Use a cultipacker, roller, or your ATV tires to pack the field to insure good seed/soil contact.
9. Wait for rain! Sugar beets require 12 to 18 inches of moisture during a 5 month growing season.

**Note** Sugar beets can take 2-3 weeks to germinate and emerge after planting. The first stage of beet growth is the canopy or tops. This will be the main growth phase for 4-5 weeks. Then the root growth will become the primary growth phase and that will continue for the next several months until they reach maturity.

## Weed Control for Your Sugar Beets

Sugar beets can be a finicky crop to grow and they do not do well with weed competition, especially when a seedling. Sometimes several applications of herbicides are needed.

As with all food plots it is always easiest and cheapest to start with a weed free seed bed using glyphosate (Roundup). For sugar beets, till the soil in the Fall or as early in the Spring as possible. Then spray emerging vegetation 2 weeks before planting your sugar beets.

To control grasses after germination, use a grass selective herbicide such as **Select** or **Poast**. Spray when grasses are about 2” tall. You may have to spray again in 5-6 weeks.

Controlling broadleaf weeds after germination is more difficult and can be costly. 8-10 oz of **Betamix** is an option but it is expensive.



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