

# Carbon Cover

## Cover Crops are...

grasses, legumes, or flowering plants that are planted to increase soil health by reducing erosion; improving soil structure, moisture, and nutrient content; suppressing weeds; providing habitat for beneficial predatory insects; and as forage for farm animals. **Cover crops can also reduce carbon in the atmosphere.**

## Here's how it works...

Like most plants, cover crops convert carbon dioxide into organic material within the soil through photosynthesis.

Because plants pull in CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and store it in their biomass, plant residue that decomposes on fields contributes to soil carbon.

The roots and shoots of cover crops feed bacteria, fungi, earthworms and other soil organisms, which increases soil carbon levels over time.

Consistent use of cover crops on the same fields over time can increase soil organic matter (SOM), which represents an increase in soil carbon sequestration.



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