

About Sunn Hemp

Sunn Hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*) is an annual legume that can be grown as a green manure or cover crop. It improves soil health by reducing soil erosion and adding beneficial organic matter.



The O'ahu Resource Conservation & Development Council is an independent non-profit entity that promotes wise stewardship of our island resources. We are pleased to partner with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, Pioneer Hi-Bred, UH-College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources and local retail centers to offer this locally grown product.

Island Fresh
Buy Local It Matters
Join the movement!

'Tropic Sun'

Sunn Hemp

"Improving local quality of life by encouraging activities that conserve and sustain our natural, human, cultural and economic resources."

Thank you for supporting our work. To learn more, or to order more seeds, contact us today.



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Locally Grown Green Manure

Sunn Hemp (Crotalaria juncea)

Info on 'Tropic Sun' Sunn Hemp



Sunn Hemp can be identified by its simple elliptical leaves and bright yellow flowers. It grows year-round in Hawai'i and has a maximum height of 4 to 6 feet.

'Tropic Sun' sunn hemp is non-toxic to animals and may be used as forage.

Sunn hemp is drought tolerant, and well-adapted to semi-arid conditions, but greatest growth occurs with a minimum of 1 inch of rain per week.

Sunn hemp greatly increases organic nitrogen availability, and when tilled into the soil adds significant amounts of biomass, or "green manure", which increases the level of organic matter in soil.

Sunn hemp is great for weed suppression, controlling root knot nematodes, and loosening subsoil. It can be used as a trap crop to reduce insect pests in the garden, and attracts beneficial insects such as bees and predatory wasps.

How to Grow Sunn Hemp

Site preparation: Remove all weeds and lightly till or hoe.

Planting and Incorporating: Seed should be planted at a rate of 40 lbs. per acre, or 15-20 seeds/ft² for best results. Broadcast seed by hand or with a manual spreader and immediately rake soil over them. In larger fields, a light harrow to no more than 1 inch is recommended.

Irrigation and Maintenance: Irrigation may be required if planted during the dry summer months. Once established sunn hemp requires little to no maintenance.

Growth: Seeds will germinate within 24 hours of the first 0.5 inch rainfall or good soaking. Time to establishment is 7-10 days. Time to bud stage is around 60 days.

Mowing: Cut or mow when plants are about 3 ft. high, or just beginning to bloom (between 30 and 50 days growth)*. Plant material can be tilled in, left on the surface as mulch or added to a compost pile.



*Mowing may be difficult if it is grown beyond the full-bloom stage.



Benefits of Growing Sunn Hemp

- Low to no maintenance
- Weed suppression
- Reduces soil erosion with its long taproot and fibrous lateral roots
- Establishes in 7 to 10 days
- Grows year-round in Hawai'i
- Grows well by itself and in combination
- Increases nitrogen availability in soil
- Drought resistant
- Suppresses nematodes
- 'Tropic Sun' sunn hemp is not toxic to animals and can be used as forage
- Provides habitat for beneficial insects