

# Autumn care for rapeseed

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## Agrotechnical and Plant Protection Measures

Observance of proper cultivation technology, continuous monitoring and effective control of pests is a guarantee for obtaining good yields from oilseed rape.

### Crop rotation

Cereals, legumes and row crops are the most suitable predecessors for oilseed rape, as they free the area early and allow sufficient time for soil preparation for sowing. Sunflower is an unsuitable predecessor, since both crops are hosts of economically important diseases such as *Alternaria*, *Sclerotinia*, grey mould and others. It is best to sow oilseed rape in the same place every 3-4 years.

## Soil tillage

It is necessary to ensure a loose and soft surface layer, free of clods and weeds, without plant residues from the previous crop. Oilseed rape has very small seeds and this requires a firm seedbed. In order for the seeds to emerge uniformly and to preserve soil moisture, rolling must be carried out before and during sowing.

## Good soil moisture reserve

Suitable soil moisture reserve for sowing is about 70% of field capacity. In case of prolonged drought, it is recommended to wait for rainfall in order to carry out sowing.

## Suitable soil type

Soils with medium to heavy mechanical composition, neutral reaction - pH 6-7, rich in humus and calcium, with good water-holding capacity and not prone to soil crust formation are suitable for oilseed rape.

## Sowing

From the end of August until the end of September and the beginning of October is the most optimal period for sowing oilseed rape. Before the onset of winter frosts, the plants should have formed a rosette with 6-8 leaves and a well-developed root system. The optimum sowing depth is 2-4 cm to ensure uniform crop emergence.

## Fertilization

Soil nutrient status and the required fertilizer rates for the crop are determined most accurately after soil analysis for each specific field. Phosphorus and potassium fertilizers are applied with the primary soil tillage, and nitrogen fertilizers are applied as top dressing. Recommended fertilizer rates:

- for poorly supplied soils: Nitrogen 18-20 kg/da; Phosphorus 8-10 kg/da; Potassium 10-12 kg/da.

- for well supplied and highly fertile soils: Nitrogen 14-16 kg/da; Phosphorus 6-8 kg/da; Potassium 9-10 kg/da.

## Control

### *Weed control*

The yield of oilseed rape can be severely reduced and it may even be necessary to plough up the crop in autumn when the stand is heavily infested with weeds. To reduce competition for water, light and nutrients, early destruction of weeds is important.

Sowing oilseed rape on fields heavily infested with wild mustard and wild radish should be avoided due to the risk of cross-pollination and difficult control of weeds from the same family.

For weed control, soil herbicides must be applied before sowing or after sowing, before crop emergence or at early growth stages of oilseed rape and weeds.



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