

## Buckwheat - A Summer Soil Boost

<http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/buckwheat-summer-soil-boost>

Recharge your soil by using buckwheat as a cover crop

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and wind.

A quick cover crop of buckwheat sown in the vegetable garden's midseason bare spots recharges the soil. When turned in, the buckwheat adds organic matter and makes soil nutrients, particularly phosphorus and calcium, more accessible to the fall crops that follow.

**Sow.** Lightly scatter buckwheat seed evenly over damp, bare soil, so that the seeds fall about an inch apart. Rake back and forth over the bed to cover the seeds. Keep the soil moist until germination, which typically occurs in less than a week. Buckwheat can be sown through late summer, but frost will kill the tender plants.

**Grow.** Dense, leafy buckwheat matures in just 4 to 6 weeks and crowds out most weeds. Nectar and pollen from the plant's pretty white flowers lure pollinators and beneficial insects, including lady beetles and parasitic wasps. Its fibrous root system prevents erosion from rain

**Dig.** Turn under the cover crop a week after it begins to flower by sliding a sharp spade just below the soil surface and flipping it over so the top growth is buried. Allow the buckwheat to decompose for 2 weeks before seeding fall crops or planting garlic.