

## Description

‘AU Early Cover’ hairy vetch [*Vicia villosa* Roth] is a naturalized cool season annual legume. It has a trailing habit with clasping tendrils. Vegetation averages 2 to 3 feet tall. It produces racemes of purple blooms in April (earlier than other released cultivars). Tan colored legume seed pods are ready for harvest in May. Each pod produces several round black seed.



## Development and Adaptation

AU Early Cover was developed from germplasm collected in Henry County, Alabama. Plant breeding techniques were employed to select early blooming and early developing lines. Three lines of genetic material were developed which eventually became AU Early Cover. It was tested in Americus, Georgia and in five sites from North Alabama to South Alabama. AU Early Cover blooms 30 to 37 days earlier than

commercial hairy vetches. AU Early Cover became the earliest developing hairy vetch cultivar in the U.S. It is adapted to upland well-drained soils in the Southeastern U.S. especially central and southern parts of Alabama and Georgia.

## Establishment and Management

Seedbed preparation should begin well in advance of planting. Prior to planting, the site should be firm and have accumulated soil moisture. AU Early Cover can be broadcast or drilled. For maximum cool season coverage 30 pounds of inoculated seed per acre is recommended. Plant in the fall, it is usually planted in North Alabama and North Georgia from September 1 to October 15. In South Alabama and South Georgia it is planted from September 15 to November 1. Soil pH should be raised to 6.0. Apply fertilizer as recommended by soil test. Planting depth should be .5 to 1 inch. When using AU Early Cover for conservation tillage, systemic herbicides produce a more complete kill than contact herbicides. A complete kill of vegetation improves planting efficiency of the summer crop.



## Conservation Uses

The primary uses for AU Early Cover include green manure crop, pollinator habitat and especially as a cover crop for conservation tillage. By mid-February when commercial hairy vetch has little accumulated growth, Au Early Cover can have 150 to 200 pounds per acre of dry matter production. This provides earlier and more complete coverage for conservation tillage.



## Availability

Breeder seed of AU Early Cover is being maintained at the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center in Americus, Georgia. Southern Proprietary Seeds Inc. Lake Oswego, Oregon is producing other classes of AU Early Cover for public utilization.

## For More Information

Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center  
295 Morris Drive  
Americus, Georgia 31719  
Phone: 229-924-4499  
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/gapmc/>

OR Contact

Your local USDA Natural Resources  
Conservation Service Office

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## **'AU Early Cover' Hairy Vetch**

*Vicia villosa* Roth.



**Jimmy Carter  
Plant Materials Center  
Americus, Georgia**