

PASTURE PLANTS

for sheep
and goats

Most sheep and goats are raised on pasture or range land. Diverse pastures with both grasses and legumes, plus some forbs and potentially browse are ideal for small ruminants. Some forages can be planted to extend the grazing season or provide high quality forage during warmer temperatures. Pasture composition varies by climate and geography.



Cool season grasses form the basis of most pastures in moderate climates. Common cool season grasses include orchardgrass, tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, and Kentucky bluegrass



Legumes (alfalfa, clover) tend to be higher in protein, fiber, calcium, and carotene than cool season grasses. They also grow better in the summer and reduce the need for expensive nitrogen fertilizer.



Warm season grasses (annual and perennial) grow best during the summer. Many **native grasses** are warm season.



Winter annuals such as ryegrass, wheat, and oats can be planted to provide winter grazing. Cover crops can be grazed by sheep and goats.



Warm season legumes such as cowpeas and sunn hemp are typically planted in the spring. They provide high quality grazing during the summer.

High tannin forages such as sericea lespedeza, birdsfoot trefoil, and sainfoin can be beneficial due to their potential anti-parasitic activity. They are also, non-bloating.



Herbs (e.g., chicory, plantain) are often mistaken for weeds, but they make excellent forages, improving livestock health and performance.



Brassicas (kale, rape, and turnips) can be planted to extend the grazing season.



Goats are primarily **browsers**, preferring to eat leaves, buds, and twigs from woody plants shrubs, vines, and trees. Browse can be quite nutritious during the growing season.

