Table 7-8: Suggested Planting Dates for Forages Grown in Ohio.

Forage Species	Northern Ohio	Southern Ohio
Legumes		
Alfalfa	4/1–5/1 or 8/1–8/15	3/20–4/25 or 8/1–8/30
Alsike clover[1]	2/1–5/1 or 7/20–8/10	2/1–4/25 or 8/1–8/20
Annual lespedeza	NR[2]	2/15–4/15
Birdsfoot trefoil	4/1–5/1	3/20–4/25
Crownvetch	4/1–5/1	3/20–4/25
Kura clover	4/1–5/1	3/20–4/25
Red clover[1]	2/1–5/1 or 7/20–8/10	2/1–4/25 or 8/1–8/20
Sweetclover	4/1–5/1	3/20–4/25
White clover[1]	2/1–5/1 or 7/20–8/10	2/1–4/15 or 8/1–8/20
Perennial Grasses and Forbs		
Festulolium	3/15–5/1 or 8/1–8/20	3/1–4/20 or 8/1–8/30
Kentucky bluegrass	3/15–5/1 or 8/1–8/30	3/1–4/15 or 8/10–9/15
Orchardgrass	3/15–5/1 or 8/1–8/20	3/1–4/20 or 8/1–8/30
Perennial ryegrass	3/15–5/1 or 8/1–8/20	NR[2]
Reed canarygrass	3/15–5/1 or 8/1–8/15	3/1–4/20 or 8/1–8/25
Smooth bromegrass	3/15–5/1 or 8/1–8/20	3/1–4/20 or 8/1–8/30
Tall fescue	3/15–5/1 or 8/1–8/20	3/1–4/20 or 8/1–8/30
Timothy	3/15–5/1 or 8/1–10/5	2/15–4/20 or 8/1–10/15
Big bluestem	4/20–5/15	4/15–5/15
Eastern gamagrass	4/20–5/15	4/15–5/15
Indiangrass	4/20–5/15	4/15–5/15
Switchgrass	4/20–5/15	4/15–5/15
Chicory	4/1–5/1 or 8/1–8/20	3/15–4/20 or 8/1–8/30
Annual Crops		
Annual ryegrass	4/1–5/1 or 7/20 to 8/30	3/15–4/20 or 8/1 to 9/15
Pearl millet	5/15–7/5	5/1–7/15
Sudangrass	5/15–7/5	5/1–7/15
Sorghum-sudangrass	5/15–7/5	5/1–7/15
Sorghum, forage	5/15–7/5	5/1–7/15

[1] February to early March is the recommended frost seeding period for clovers; some cool-season grasses may also be frost seeded, but that is less common.

[2] NR = Not recommended.

Direct seeding without a companion crop in the spring allows growers to harvest two or three crops of high-quality forage in the seeding year, particularly when seeding alfalfa and red clover. Select fields with little erosion potential when direct seeding into a tilled seedbed. Weed control is important during early establishment when direct seeding pure legume stands. Several preplant and post-emergent herbicide options are available for pure legume seedings (refer to the *Weed Control Guide for Ohio Field Crops,* Bulletin 789).

Small grain companion crop seedings are successful when managed properly. Companion crops reduce erosion in conventional seedings and help minimize weed competition. Companion crops usually increase total forage tonnage in the seeding year, but forage quality will be lower than direct seeded legumes. When seeding with a small grain companion crop, take precautions to reduce excessive competition, which may lead to establishment failures: