

Using Row Cover

Row cover is a light-weight fabric used in gardening to **keep insects away from plants** and **provide frost protection and extra warmth**. It is popular with organic gardeners and farmers. It lets in air and water, so it can be left in place for periods of time.

How to Use It with Hoops

1. Place 2 hoops on each end of the bed. Then space hoops every 4-5 feet in between. *See picture to the right..*
2. Stretch out the row cover over the length of the bed. Unfold it so that it is a single layer.
3. Place it over the hoops. Pull it gently so that it is snug.
4. Use rocks, bricks, chunks of soil, or other heavy objects to hold the sides and ends.



Row cover being used with hoops

How to Use It without Hoops

1. Stretch out the row cover over the length of the bed. Unfold it so that it is a single layer.
2. Lay row cover lightly over garden bed. Don't stretch it too tight. You run the risk of damaging your plants.
3. Use rocks, dirt clods, bricks, or other heavy objects to hold the sides and ends. *See picture below.*

When to Use Row Cover

- Spring: Directly after planting cool season transplants of broccoli, cabbage, kale, and other cole crops. Main reason: Keep cabbage moths and cabbage worms away and give the new plants some extra warmth. Use hoops.
- Early summer: Directly after planting warm season transplants of tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant. Main reason: Keep flea beetles off of eggplant and give the new plants some extra warmth. Use hoops.
- Early summer: Directly after planting warm season seeds of zucchini, squash, cucumber, and green beans. Main benefit: Keep bugs away. Use with or without hoops.
- Use it in the fall to extend the harvest of cool season, fall planted vegetables.

How to Manage Row Cover

Take a peek under the row cover every few days to monitor plants and conditions. Feel free to remove the row cover to do some weeding and watering. Put it back in place when you are done.



Row cover being used without hoops

Remember that row covers trap heat. **For cool season crops**, as temperatures warm into the mid-80s, remove the row cover. **For tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant**, remove after about a month.

For zucchini, squash, cucumber, and green beans, remove the cover when plants start to flower. Except for green beans, these plants need pollinators (eg. bees, wasps, etc.) to pollinate flowers to make fruits.

Row cover can be reused the next year if it does not get damaged. Let it dry, shake out the dirt, and store it in a garage or out building.