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[Soil+ Cover Cropping International](#)

### In the new Soil+ Cover Cropping section

Thousands of farmers across the globe have changed their farming from conventional to No-Till - yet it's been a tremendous step for each one of them. Despite help from both official organisations and from individual farmers, some who have formed into self-help groups themselves, there remains an element of doubt for each farmer who decides to take the plunge into No-Till.

Planting seed into uncultivated land is just alien, goes against logic, is close to sacrilegious. Why do it if you don't have to? Answering some of these questions is the reason why we started our **Soil+** section in Practical Farm Ideas some five years ago.

In the new issue of Practical Farm Ideas the **Soil+** section includes:

1. improving the soil fertility of grassland, a largely neglected area of soil management;
2. how beetles will help reduce slug damage;
3. the achievements of the three winners of the UK Soil Farmer of the Year competition
4. a guide, with pictures, to 22 soil improving plants - soil preferences; their beneficial action; how to establish

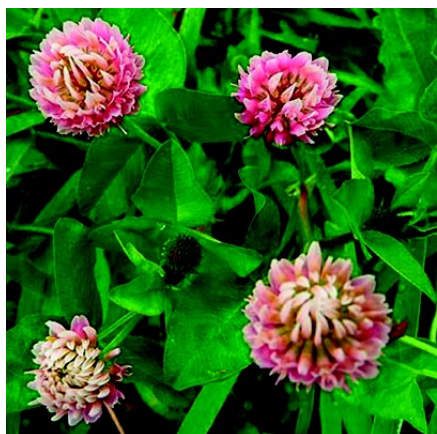
Our grassland article comes from a farmer who has built a system for making substantial quantities of compost tea and also makes a large quantity of compost itself for the all grass farm. Existing swards are being direct drilled with herbs and other plants, and new leys established with seed mixtures which include grasses that are selected on unconventional criteria. He keeps sucklers bred from a retired dairy herd.



Compost tea equipment in winter mode. Don't wash and kill bugs!

### **The Guide to Soil Improving Plants**

This article brings together information of real value for all farmers interested in soil improvement, arable and grassland. The information is of particular value to farmers taking up No-Till, as cover crops are an essential part of most No-Till systems.



Farmers who have had a cover crop failure in the first years of converting to No-Till are more likely to give up and revert to the plough, while those who get good covers are likely to continue and build on their success.

Alsike clover. Similar to red clover. Not fussy about soil conditions, and thrives in acid, heavy, waterlogged soils. Useful N fixer and ideal for green manuring as well as grazing and cutting. Lasts 2 - 3 years.



Practical Farm Ideas has a large 'Made it Myself' section, which in this issue has a one ton pickup converted into an oversize Kubota/Deere Gator type machine; a sheep feeder made using 200l additive barrels; a home made machine that tells the tractor driver the name of the field they are in; a new milking parlour with floors that all slope in the right direction; a sward lifter designed for stoney uplands... and more.

Practical Farm Ideas was founded in 1992 and is written and published quarterly by Mike Donovan. It is targeted at working farmers, farm employees and managers, and farming students. It carries no advertising and has no sponsors, and is available on-line at £16.50 a year.

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"You have a great wee magazine that I look forward to receiving every quarter. I will send you some pictures of our little inventions one day and if you are ever in NZ then look me up. Regards Allen Collinson (NZ) sent April 7 2017

"Please send the BACS bank details as I wish to renew my subscription to Practical Farm Ideas. I have been with you from the start and always get something out of each edition  
Many thanks Geoff Case Sent April 8 2017

"Your magazine is great. I find it very helpful and read every page. Keep up the good work. Robert Cummings, Co Armagh sent Mar 8 2017

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