

# Pigeon Pea “Fava Larga”



Pigeon Pea (*cajanus cajan*) is well known around the world ranked 5th by acres planted of legumes and used extensively as a cover crop. While it's claim to fame is that it will produce a crop on 1 inch of rain making it well suited to drought areas of the U.S, it prefers about 15 – 20 inches to be very productive.

Pigeon Pea is also known as the #1 companion crop in the world and is one of the 3 known crops to have roots so acidic that they dissolve the locked Phosphorus in the soil releasing it for the next crop to be grown.

The pea itself is used as edible pod or dried pea, and used extensively in many countries as a major food source. This crop is also known to be excellent forage for cattle, sheep, goats and wildlife during droughts. It is also possible to make hay from this crop.

Pigeon Pea is used as a cover crop in many countries. It has a very deep taproot opening up the compacted soil that adds drought tolerance to the next crop. It is also a legume so it produces Nitrogen, and its acidic roots make Phosphorus available for the next crop. Top-growth biomass production has been reported as high as 38 tons of fresh weight green matter per acre. Pigeon Pea research in Florida has shown nitrogen fixation as high as 250 lbs per acre.

“Fava Larga” is the variety we are presently promoting. Seeding rate is 20 - 30 pounds per acre for hay production and 10-12 pounds per acre for cover crop planting. Plant on well drained soils with a pH of 5.0-7.0. It does well planted with a drill or in rows. If in rows plants should be 2-6 inches apart. Plant 1/2” deep when soil temperatures are at least 55 F and above. Inoculating the seed at planting with cow pea EL rhizobium inoculant helps with nitrogen fixing. Pigeon Pea will need no nitrogen fertilizer or potash. However, it will respond to adding phosphorus to the soils with medium or low phosphorus levels. This crop needs moisture at planting and then needs more during the growing season to make good growth. This crop is very vigorous in growth and may get 6 - 8 feet in height. This plant at about 18 inches in height will start producing tannins which livestock do not care for. When cut for hay the tannins evaporate and the plant is palatable for livestock. Under most planting situations, Fava Larga” will not make much, if any seed in the U.S.

**Koolau Seed & Supply Company**

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