

# GREENCOVER

# SOIL

# HEALTH

*Resource Guide*

SEVENTH EDITION



## MILPA

The Milpa technique originated in Central America where the Mayans used a mixture of corn, squash, and beans to improve the soil and grow food. At Green Cover we went beyond the three sisters and compiled a mix of over 40 different seeds. This is an excellent way to utilize a small portion of land to produce food without going through the hassle of tillage, weeding, and hours of planning.

The modern Milpa concept was launched in 2017 with a partnership between Green Cover and the Farm to Food Bank project in Oklahoma. Green Cover donated Milpa garden seed to several regenerative farmers throughout Oklahoma who partnered with the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. The simplistic beauty of the system is that all the seeds were mixed together and drilled with a regular grain drill, turning a small field into a large garden with very low labor inputs.



Green Cover provided the seed mixes which included fresh greens (turnips, collards, mustard), root vegetables (radish, turnips), legumes (cowpeas, mung beans, black beans), and vine crops (squash, melons, cucumbers, pumpkins). The gleaning efforts were a true community effort with members from various community groups all pitching in to help feed their community. In 2017, about 6,800 pounds (about 5,440 meals) of fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables were donated from these gardens to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. The Milpa gardens not only provided fresh and healthy food to these local communities, but helped build community relationships as well. These gardens also served as a diverse cover crop mix to help improve soil health, water quality, and habitat for pollinators and wildlife on these farms.

Ryan and Jennifer Speer of Sedgwick, KS are Milpa garden veterans having grown tons of produce each of the last few years for their local community. “A typical garden is fairly high maintenance but the Milpa garden is plant it and forget it,” notes Ryan. “Since there are no neat, straight rows, harvesting is hard work. “It’s kind of

like a scavenger hunt. The yellow squash and pumpkins show up really nice but the green cucumbers are really hard to see in there. When the Milpa really starts to produce, we’ll start getting 2-5 laundry baskets of vegetables every other day.”



Photo by Ryan Speer

## FIRST ACRE PROGRAM

At Green Cover, we believe that with healthy soils we can grow healthy plants, which will produce healthy food, which will build healthy people, families, and communities. With that in mind, we will donate an acre of highly diverse Milpa garden seed to anyone who is working with their local food bank or resource center to help feed and build their local community! So for the benefit of your community, consider adding a little bit of Milpa to your already chaotic life! Also, if you would like to participate in this program but do not have a farm, go to [www.milpagarden.com](http://www.milpagarden.com) and you can purchase an acre of seed and we will ship it to a farmer who is willing to donate the land and the labor to bring the produce to fruition.

Visit [www.milpagarden.com](http://www.milpagarden.com) to get all the information and to order seed or participate in the first acre program!



Photo by Lisa Knauf



# TESTIMONY

"The kids absolutely love going in and picking the stuff - it's like a scavenger hunt in the jungle."

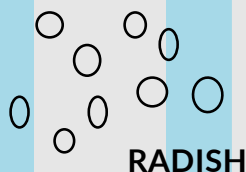
- Dale Strickler

## ADDITIONAL SEEDS:

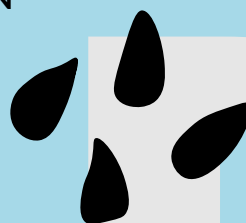
MUNG BEANS  
SPRING PEAS  
COLLARDS  
TURNIPS  
ARUGULA  
CYLINDRA BEET  
CHIA  
BUCKWHEAT  
FLAX  
FLOWER MIX



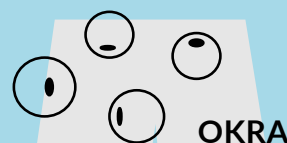
PUMPKIN



RADISH



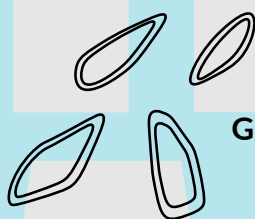
WATERMELON



OKRA



CLOVER



GOURDS



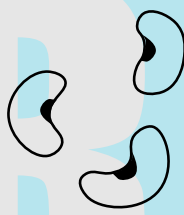
CUCUMBER



SWISS CHARD



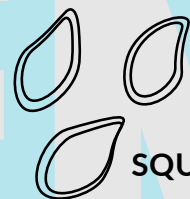
POPCORN



COWPEAS



SUNFLOWER



SQUASH

## MIX

The Milpa Garden mix is a great way to get many different kinds of unique produce by utilizing a small portion of land without going through the hassle of tillage, weeding, and hours of planning. It also provides a wonderful opportunity to help your community.

## BENEFITS:

- 1) Attracts beneficial insects and pollinators.
- 2) Increases microbial diversity and activity in soil.
- 3) Improves soil and water health.
- 4) Provides excellent habitat for birds and wildlife .
- 5) Leverages the power of diversity in a single planting.
- 6) Cycles, sequesters and shares nutrients between plants.
- 7) Grows nutritious food while improving the environment.