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CREATING THE PERFECT HABITAT

# Using Miscanthus as a Game Cover Crop



# What is Miscanthus?

- Miscanthus or “Elephant Grass” is now a fairly common sight on farms as an energy or “Bio-Fuel” crop
- Most of the varieties now grown in the UK are *Miscanthus giganteus* which are sterile hybrids that originated in Japan
- There are ornamental *Miscanthus* varieties (*Miscanthus sinensis*) but these are not grown for bio-fuel

# Key benefits

- Long life span (up-to 20 years) with very low running costs
- Very robust, secure and reliable game cover
- Potential for harvesting the crop to produce an income



# Why do Gamekeepers like it?

- Reliable cover that stands up to the worst of the weather
- Once established, almost zero running costs or management
- Leaf litter creates a clean dry surface for the birds, particularly useful on wet, heavy soils



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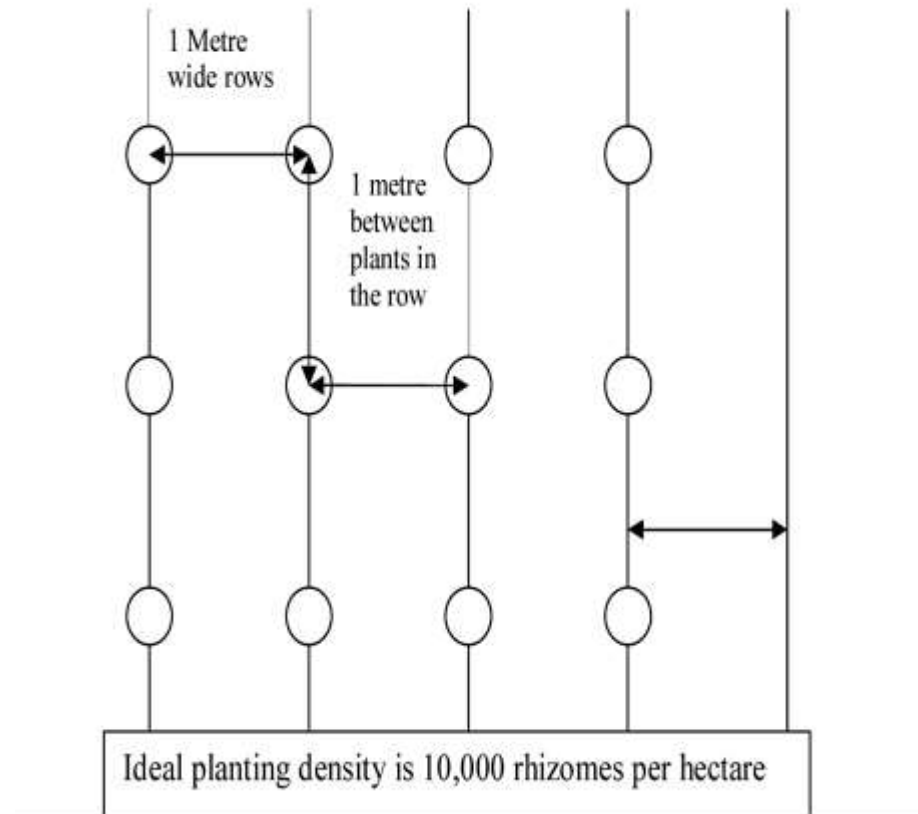


# Miscanthus Rhizomes

- Oakbank offer the Miscanthus as rhizomes, not plug plants, for the following reasons.
  - Cost: It is far cheaper to use rhizomes
  - Ease of planting large areas
  - Growth rate: experience has shown you get a workable crop in 2-3 years.
  - The end result is excellent for game cover and can be harvested for bio-fuel or bedding (earning £££s)

# Planting Miscanthus

- Game cover Miscanthus needs to be far less thick than bio-energy crops
- Oakbank recommend a minimum of 1metre between the rows and approx 1m between the plants in the row
- We recommend investing in a decent planter or contractor to get this done properly
- The Rhizomes need to be planted approx 10cm (4”) deep into a well cultivated seed bed
- The plot MUST be rolled to consolidate after planting
- Weed control is very straightforward, but grass weed issues should be tackled before planting. Talk to Oakbank for advice



# Will you lose the drive in the 1<sup>st</sup> year?

- It is likely that the cover for year 1 will be less good than normal if you do the whole plot
- We have trialled a method with the Rhizomes oversown with half rate Maize and this appears to have worked well
- Alternatively, on large plots adopt a striped approach which can work extremely well. Maize grown alongside the Miscanthus provides cover, feed and variety. The Miscanthus helps to keep out the wind and protect the maize crop.





When you get it right, it provides  
fabulous cover!





# Miscanthus at Caerhays in Cornwall



# Questions?

- You probably have lots of questions and we would be delighted to help you make the correct decision for your situation.
- Oakbank will give you full costings and the benefit of our experience in using this crop for game cover, which is not the same as planting it for other purposes.
- These differences are crucial for delivering a crop that will serve you well
- For more details please call us on 01480 890686, we'll be very happy to help!

