

# Tarping for Reduced-Tillage in Small Scale Vegetable Systems

## *Winter 2022 Reflections: Applications*

<b>How have you typically used tarps on your farm?</b>
Tarps are applied in the spring before transplanting crops.
Our tarp use has definitely evolved over time. When the farm moved to a new property (5 years ago) we had tarps on some plots for a year before removing with the intention of eliminating some perennials weeds. Now we primarily use them for shorter intervals (4-8 weeks) to kill rolled down cover crops or simply hold unused plots for awkward periods between plantings of cash or cover crops. They also help us reclaim plots that have become a little too weedy over 2-3 years without any tarping. With the help of tarps, we've transitioned to a no-till operation.
We tarp in early spring to kill cover crops and after cash crops to kill residue.
We used tarps to keep winter squash from freezing in the fall. We started using tarps after your workshop at NOFA-NY this year to cover for weed suppression
We use tarps to cover our beds over winter. After 3 months the fields are free of organic debris, dry and ready to be worked in early March. This system has allowed us to maintain a no-till system while cropping as soon as possible to maximize field production.
We tarp over the winter to incorporate crop debris, reduce erosion, and stop early spring weeds. We tarp between the first and second planting to incorporate crop and weed debris. In both cases, we usually flail mow first before we put the tarp down.
We've used large silage tarps over the past two seasons to convert lawn into new growing beds. We tarp for about 6-8 weeks, then remove the tarp and make beds. Sometimes we'll do a round of cover cropping and re-apply tarps if we don't immediately need the space. We also plan to tarp individual beds to help terminate crops and reduce weed pressure.
We use tarps to create a stale seed bed ahead of carrots, parsnips etc. We also use them to terminate potato vines, so nutrients and energy from plant top go to tubers. We cover potato plots two weeks before harvest to make the potato plow function better, kill sod, terminate cash crop of greens, rescue areas gone to weeds so they don't seed, cover compost piles, and use them as a slip and slide.
After prepping beds for direct seeding, we cover with a tarp for at least 3-4 weeks, flame weed, and then direct seed. We also used them on our spring beds over this winter so that beds will be ready for seeding very early next year (plus, tarps that were folded up last winter ended up getting chewed on by rodents).
Tarps get used after a winter-killed or mowed cover crop, before hand or mechanical bed prep, or to cover beds over winter.
I place it on prepped carrot beds, leave for 3 weeks, remove, and seed.
Tarps are placed pre-direct seeded crops for weed control.
Tarps are used for weed suppression and for converting pasture into vegetable production.
Three main applications: 1. After initial tillage in new plot to create stale seed bed. 2. To speed decomposition of cover crops. 3. To hold bed space until planting + transplanting.

Tarps are used to kill weeds.
Bed prep/bed saving/ mulching/ terminating cash crops are all ways tarps get used on our farm.
We put tarps onto cut down cover crop to break it down. Tarps are put in place for a few weeks before planting into a weedy area.
Tarps are used for occultation on areas that had heavy weed pressure the previous season.
Tarps are used as in-season weed suppression (after a spring crop, before a fall crop) or as a late season substitute for cover cropping by tarping an entire block so that it is ready for early fall use
We use tarps for cover crop breakdown, weed suppression, winter cover, soil protection, and seed germination.
Tarps get used to "hold" prepped beds, to kill cover crops, and for stale seed bedding.
Our farm uses tarps for weed suppression in spring and summer, soil cover for non-cover cropped beds in winter, and tillage reduction.
Between seasons and decomposing cover crop
We use silage tarps for weed suppression and follow tarping with cover crops.
We use tarps to kill cover crops, smother weeds, and kill sod.
Tarps cover daffodils and a few other dormant perennials (landscape fabric). Also, they cover ground in hoopouses where cover cropping rotation doesn't work (silage tarps).
Tarps are used for cover crop termination, weed control, and over wintering soil protection.
Tarps keep weeds from growing on open ground before replanting, preparing new ground for planting, and killing cover crops.