

Sunn Hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*) has been touted as a great green manure and cover crop since the 1930's, when it was reported to be an excellent soil-improving crop. Sunn hemp is a tropical to sub-tropical plant that acts like a summer annual when grown in the continental United States. Sunn hemp produces high organic matter yields while fixing large amounts of nitrogen. However, the difficulty in acquiring seed and cheap fertilizer prices caused many farmers to abandon the use of this crop. Energy costs have brought leguminous cover crops back to the forefront for sustainable agriculture production and have led to efforts to increase production of sunn hemp seed. Some recent studies indicate sunn hemp can produce 5,000-6,000 pounds of biomass per acre and 120-140 pounds of nitrogen per acre in the southern United States .



**'Tropic Sun' Sunn Hemp Plots at PMC**

Sunn hemp is adapted to a wide range of soils including poor sandy sites.

Since 'Tropic Sun' sunn hemp ( a release from the Hawaii PMC) does not produce viable seed in the southeastern U.S., due to sensitivity to frost, it has little potential to become weedy following planting.



### **Fencing Around Sunn Hemp**

Due to the high protein content of sunn hemp and subsequent deer browse, it is often necessary to fence small areas of sunn hemp in high density deer regions.



### **Plot Clipping**

In order to determine more specific information on sunn hemp as a green manure and cover crop for the Southeast, the Jimmy Carter PMC has established a replicated study in Americus, Georgia. This study will test and evaluate the effect of seeding rate and clipping date on dry matter production of 'Tropic Sun' Sunn Hemp.

Plots were planted at 20, 40 and 60 pounds of seed per acre over 4 replications. The study area was clipped at 45 and 60 days after planting.



### **Plots Measured for Dry Matter production**

After clipping, plots were measured for dry matter production to determine the effect of seeding rates and clipping dates on cover crop production. Results will be statistically analyzed and reported in the PMC annual technical report.



### **Sunn Hemp Plots in Bloom**