

## The Regenerative Organic Principle of Armouring the Soil

### Introduction

Many of us have childhood memories of pulling weeds out of the garden. Every weed had to be pulled until all that was left was the growing vegetables and the bare soil. If there was anything growing other than what was being harvested, you would be considered a bad or messy gardener. But what if weeding does more harm than good? In this discussion, we will go over what armouring the soil is, what its benefits are and how it can be done.

### What Does “Armouring the Soil” Mean?

Armouring the soil is the act of keeping the surface of the soil covered. This is typically done through the use of cover crops or litter (crop residue or mulch).

### What Are the Advantages?

- Soil temperature is regulated and soil biology and roots are protected.
- Weeds are suppressed and soil biology is fed as plant material breaks down.
- More moisture is retained.
- Wind and water erosion is reduced or eliminated.
- Splash up effect is prevented during heavy rains.

### How Can Soil Coverage Be Achieved?

There are two primary ways that we can keep the soil covered:

- Planting cover crops
  - Intercropping can be used with a cash crop through subsequent seeding of the cover crop (ensuring cash crop is ahead in the growing cycle).
- Utilizing litter (plant material)
  - Litter/mulch can be used by spreading it out between plants, ensuring that the soil is covered.

We can also plant fall crops to keep the soil covered and keep living roots in the soil.