



GROW IT EAT IT

Maryland's Food Gardening Network



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GE 004

Floating Row Cover

Floating row covers (FRC) are white, light-weight, fabrics made from spun-bonded polyester or polypropylene. They have a “gauze-like” appearance and resemble interfacing material used in sewing. The covers are draped over plants -- individuals, rows, or groups -- and secured to the ground with landscape pins, boards, rocks, or soil. The cover “floats” directly on top of the crop. The growing plants will push the cover up, if you give it enough slack. Floating row covers allow light, air, and water to penetrate and exclude insects and other critters. Floating row covers are available in many sizes through mail order seed and garden supply companies and at some local garden centers. Some brand names are Remy and Agribon. Tips for using FRC:

- Light-weight FRCs (0.45 oz./sq. yard) are marketed as “insect barriers,” have 90%-95% light transmittance, and can be left on some crops, like beets, snap beans, salad greens, from seeding to harvest;
- Heavy-weight FRCs (up to 2.2oz./sq. yd.) are usually used to extend the growing season in spring and fall and may only have 50% light transmittance; and
- Water plants with drip irrigation or a soaker hose or use a hand-held hose or watering can.



Floating Row Covers for the Vegetable Garden

Advantages	Disadvantages
Improved plant growth from increased temperature (2 to 6 degrees F.) and humidity	Can be difficult to manage on windy sites
Frost protection in spring and fall	Pest insects can become trapped under the cover
Excludes insects, birds, deer, groundhogs, and other animals	Must be removed or pulled back from squash family plants in bloom, to allow for pollination
Can be re-used for 2 to 3 years	May occasionally abrade or injure tender new growth
Relatively inexpensive at 2.5 to 4 cents/sq. ft.	Difficult to use on tall crops like tomato