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Attracting doves to your land – Summer has officially started and I am sure that hunting season is the not a high priority to most right now. However, if you want a successful bird shoot this fall you need to begin now. There are several steps to preparing a productive bird field. Soil testing is essential to be sure that pH is adequate, and it lets you know how to fertilize the planted crop. Preparing the land will insure good seed to soil contact and reduced weed problems in the field. Planting adapted varieties is always a good practice. There are many crops that produce seed that doves will eat, but not all of these crops are suited to our climate and soil types. Finally, fertilize properly. Fertilizing according to your soil test will usually result in higher yields, which means more seed for the doves.

The most popular crops to plant in the southeast for dove fields are browntop millet, dove proso millet, sunflowers, sorghum and corn. These crops all require soils with a pH above 5.8, and many will perform even better at slightly higher pH. A major consideration when planting should be time to maturity. Crops like corn, sunflower and sorghum require around 100 or more days to mature. If you planted these crops now they would only be useful for late season hunting. If you are trying to plant a crop that will be ready opening day one of the millets would be a good choice. You can read more about attracting doves to your land at the following link:

<http://warnell.forestry.uga.edu/warnell/service/library/index.php3?docID=285>, or call or go by the extension office.