Determining the Viability of Southern Peas as a Summer Cover Crop in South Texas

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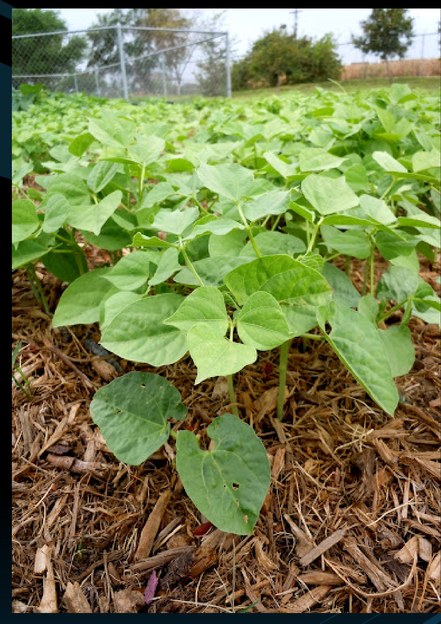
OBJECTIVE

Four types of southern peas were planted to determine if they can be used as an alternative to lablab by surviving summer environmental conditions and their ability to improve soil organic matter while providing nitrogen to the soil.

TECHNIQUES UTILIZED

On June 19th, 2012, five beds of different bean plants were sown. Included was lablab, along with top pick pinkeye, top pick cream, Mississippi pinkeye purplehall, and brown crowder. The stage for the experiment was set in San Juan, TX, in a small garden like area. Each variety received their own bed, with each bed being 3 - 4 feet apart. On August 13, 2012, the bean plants were uprooted and tilled. Soil samples were collected on September 18, 2012 and sent to College Station for testing.



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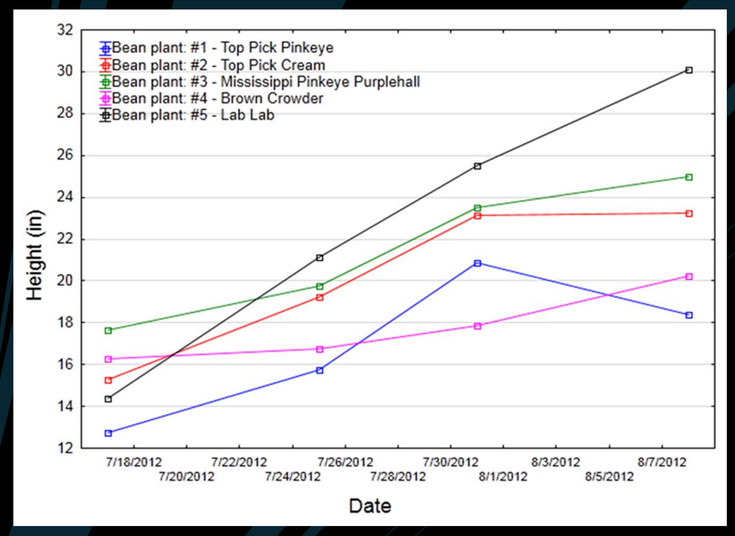
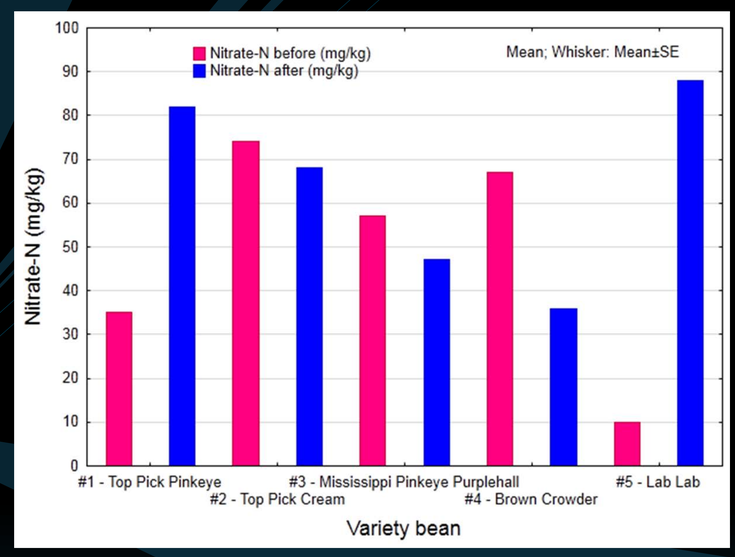
RESULTS





CONCLUSION

Lablab proved yet again to be the top bean plant that released the most amount of nitrogen into the soil. Growth, iron deficiency, and aphids never proved to be a problem for this specific plant. Perhaps in a future do over of the experiment we should start earlier, in May perhaps, and take the crop through harvest to see if leaving the beans into maturity would improve nitrogen levels in the soils.