

# Making A Case For Clover

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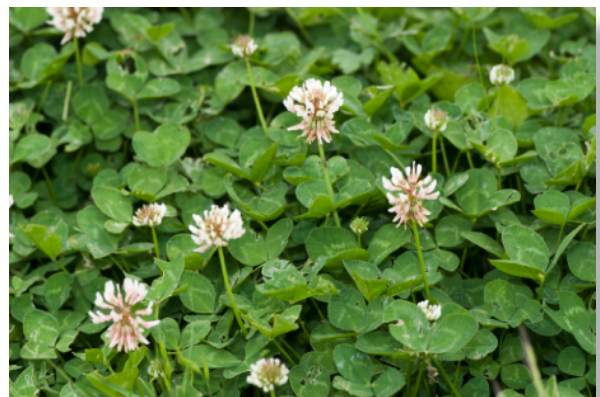
Instead of thinking of clover as a weed in your lawn, think about it as a beneficial plant. Before you gather up your stones or a handy pitchfork, hear me out! Years ago Dutch white clover (*Trifolium repens*) was included in almost all of the grass seed mixtures sold in feed stores and garden centers and for good reason! When chemical companies could not find a way to kill off dandelions and other broadleaf weeds without destroying the clover, it became a weed!

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1e/Trifolium\\_repens\\_Flowers\\_April\\_1\\_2010.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1e/Trifolium_repens_Flowers_April_1_2010.jpg)

This little legume was once considered integral to turf management. It's roots contain a bacteria that draws nitrogen from the air and puts it in your soil in a form that is usable for grass and other plants thus reducing the need for inorganic fertilizers. The taproot helps support soil structure by growing deep, acting as a type of aerator for compacted soils. Clover is an extremely drought-resistant plant that will keep its lovely green blue color even during the hottest of summers. This cuts down on irrigation. It will thrive in poor soil or shady spots and in large areas it will serve you well as a low maintenance ground cover. It holds up very well under foot traffic and for those of you who have pets, clover will tolerate dog urine better than grasses. The cheerful white flowers bring bees, butterflies, and beneficial insects to your garden areas thus supporting struggling bee and other pollinator populations. For those of you who might have bee allergies, consider keeping it cut low during bloom times. Clover seed can be mixed and spread with your favorite grass seed.

I recognize growing clover might not be for everyone especially if you or your neighbors have the impossible goal of eliminating every weed in the yard. Clover can, however, certainly help save time and money by helping to reduce the need for pesticides and herbicides, It will cut down on mowing and water use giving you more time for fishing or golf!

Fall is the best time to get that grass seed down... (see "Note" below) ...For more information, contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office at 540 586-7675.



[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/22/Trifolium\\_repens\\_blangy-tronville\\_80\\_07062007\\_3.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/22/Trifolium_repens_blangy-tronville_80_07062007_3.jpg)

### Article Sources:

- Grow Organic by Doug Oster and Jessica Walliser, page 163 “Going Dutch”
- Spring Broadleaf Weed Control in Virginia’s Lawns, Virginia Cooperative Extension [https://ext.vt.edu/lawn-garden/turfandgardentips/tips/spring\\_Broadleaf\\_control.html](https://ext.vt.edu/lawn-garden/turfandgardentips/tips/spring_Broadleaf_control.html)
- Penn State Extension, “Go Green” by Steve Green, Master Gardener Coordinator, Penn State Extension, Lackawana County <http://extension.psu.edu/lackawana/news/2013/go-green>

**Note:** *This article was published in local media, August 2014. It originally included locations & dates to promote Master Gardener/Bedford Library seminars on lawn care.*

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