

Problem: White Clover



Description: Though white clover can make an effective ground cover or even a replacement for a lawn, many homeowners consider it a weed and wish to eliminate it. White clover can be recognized by the 3-leaflet leaf that is in the clover pattern and the white flowers. Two other weeds with three-leaflet leaves are black medic and oxalis (yellow woodsorrel) but both have yellow flowers rather than white. White clover is a member of the legume family and can convert nitrogen in the air and to a form the plant can use as fertilizer. Therefore, clover is often seen in lawns that are underfertilized.

Recommendations: The best control for white clover is a thick lawn that is mowed high enough that sunlight does not hit the soil. Proper fertilization can help maintain a good thick lawn.

Controlling white clover can be a challenge. Small patches can simply be dug out and replaced with sod or reseeded. Larger infestations are commonly controlled with herbicides. If the lawn is composed of a cool-season grass such as tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass, products with triclopyr such as Bonide Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis Killer, Turflon Ester and Ortho Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis Killer are the most effective homeowner products.

Warm-season grasses such as buffalograss, bermudagrass or zoysiagrass may be injured by triclopyr and so other combination products that contain dicamba and quinclorac are better choices. Such products include Ortho Weed-B-Gon + Crabgrass Control, Spectracide Weed Stop for Lawns Plus Crabgrass Killer and Fertilome Weed-Out with Crabgrass Killer. Since these products are not as effective as products with triclopyr, more applications will be needed for control.

Fall applications for control for white clover are more effective than those applied at other times of the year.

References:

1. [White Clover](#), HG 2324, Clemson Cooperative Extension
2. [White Clover in Home Lawns](#), Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory, June 8, 2009

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