

(WHITE) CLOVER



Fall is almost here and for many of us it's time to seed our lawns with cool season grasses. Consider adding white clover to your seed mix as an Earth Kind way to help keep your lawn green this fall and winter. It requires less water than fescue and doesn't need fertilizing. White clover discourages weeds and attracts pollinators, too.

White clover is a legume, a plant that converts nitrogen from the air to useable nitrogen in the soil. By adding nitrogen to the soil instead of taking it out it improves soil without adding chemicals. White clover crowds out weeds that you don't want so you don't need to use herbicides. Its roots have a dense structure that prevents weeds from growing and also helps to stabilize soil making it less likely to wash away during heaving rains.

White clover's deep roots make it more drought-hardy than most turf grasses. White clover will stay green in times of moderate drought so you don't need to water as often. Dog urine doesn't dis-color it making it a good choice for pet areas. White clover grows slowly on short stems close to the ground so you don't have to mow it as often.

Today, many homeowners consider white clover a lawn weed but it was included in many grass seed mixes until the late 1950's when broad leaf herbicides for home use became popular.

In Oklahoma, plant white clover in mid-September through October or mid-February through early April just as you would fescue. It will form patches through branching stems that grow along the soil surface and the roots at nodes. White clover produces flowers from spring to fall, with a peak flowering period in late spring to early summer. These flowers attract pollinators and beneficial parasitoid wasps that kill garden pests. The globe shaped white "flowers" you see are actually clusters of small blooms that produce seeds, so you don't need to re-seed every spring and fall as you do with fescue.

Consider adding white clover this fall as a low maintenance, Earth-Kind addition to your lawn. The pollinators will be glad you did!



Sources:

Earth-Kind Gardening—a program that encourages non-chemical practices such as cultural, mechanical, botanical, and biological controls for garden pests.

[OSU Extension HLA-6436 Healthy Garden Soils](#)

[OSU Extension EPP-7155 Major Nectar and Pollen Plant Sources of Oklahoma](#)

Lawn and Garden Weeds, Pennsylvania State University Extension Service

University of Missouri Division of Plant Sciences Weed Guide