

WHITE CLOVER – ALL OVER!



Fall is sneaking up on us. These cooler temperatures (finally) mean it's time for many of us 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

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. Some seed companies are starting to add white clover back to their residential mixes again.

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, clover improves your soil without adding chemicals. It crowds out weeds that you do not want so you don't need to use herbicides. Win-win! 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 heavy rain.

In Oklahoma, plant white clover in mid-September through October or mid-February through early April just as you would fescue. Grass seed germinates best when the ground is consistently damp, not soggy so timely and consistent watering is essential. Fall planting offers the best opportunity for good results; warm soil, moderate temperatures and increased precipitation.

White clover will form patches through branching stems that grow along the soil surface and the roots at nodes. It 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 producing seeds so you don’t need to re-seed every spring and fall as you do with fescue.

Let’s review the many advantages of white clover:

- Deeper roots make it more drought-hardy than most turf grasses
- Stays green like fescue but requires less water
- Does not need fertilizing
- Discourages weeds
- Attracts pollinators
- Improves soil without adding chemicals
- Dog urine won’t dis-color it
- Grows slowly on short stems close to the ground so you don’t have to mow as often.

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



You can get answers to all your gardening questions by calling the Tulsa Master Gardeners Help Line at 918-746-3701 or by emailing us at mg@tulsamastergardeners.org, or come see us at our Diagnostic Center at 4116 E 15th St., Tulsa, OK.

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