

Lawn Care

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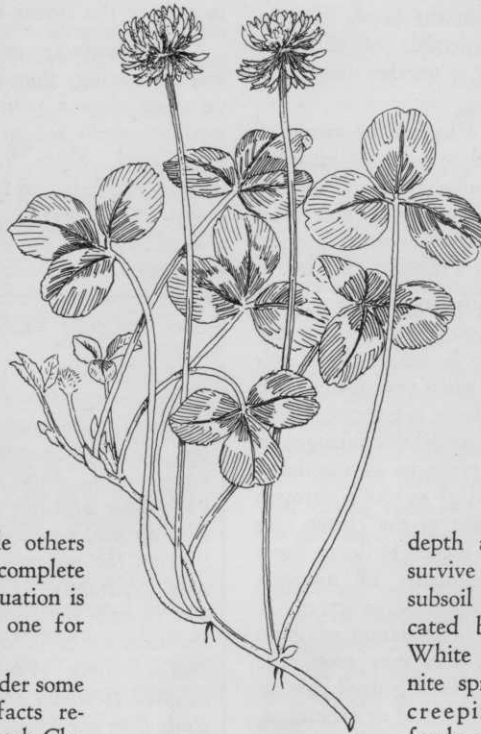
WHITE CLOVER IN LAWNS

"LEAVE Clover out of any mixture you send us. We detest it in a lawn," says one group. "Please add some extra Clover to the mixture. We want more of it," says another group.

Thus opinions differ on the merit of White Clover as a lawn mixture ingredient. Some classify it as a weed while others consider no lawn complete without it. The situation is an uncomfortable one for the seedsman.

First let us consider some of the essential facts regarding White Dutch Clover, called "Dutch" because it first became a cultivated crop in Holland. It inhabits Europe, southwestern Asia, Siberia and northern Africa. There is some doubt as to its being native to the United States and Canada.

White Clover is particularly adapted to a moist and medium warm climate.



WHITE CLOVER
(*trifolium repens*)

Nevertheless, it can withstand a normal spell of drouth provided the subsoil contains some moisture. Most of the roots of White Clover are near the surface, consequently the spread of the plant is affected by hot weather. The main tap root, however, penetrates to a considerable

depth and the plant will survive if there is some subsoil moisture. As indicated by the illustration, White Clover has a definite spreading habit. The creeping stems branch freely and develop numerous roots. Thus large patches may form very readily. The heads likewise produce many seeds which fall to the ground and keep their vitality a long time. A few seeds dropped to the ground may thus make surprisingly large patches.

This easy propagation accounts for much White Clover appearing in areas

where it has not been sown. It is also quite probable that the seeds of clover reach many lawns through topsoil and manure. During what is called a clover year the whole countryside appears to be a veritable sea of clover and yet there may have been no recent seedings. Just why, no one has been able to fully explain. The same phenomenon occurs with farm clovers which are planted for hay and pasture crops.

One objection to White Clover in lawns is that it may die out suddenly, leaving ugly bare patches in the lawn. Disease accounts for considerable of this loss while winter injury is another important factor.

White Clover is a legume by virtue of which it is enabled to take its nitrogen from the air and conserve the soil supply. Thus clover is frequently a success on nitrogen-starved soil where other ground coverings have been a complete failure.

This nitrogen-gathering ability of clover may in part account for the fact that one year there may be much clover followed by a season when practically none is evident. When clover is growing vigorously it is storing considerable nitrogen in the soil. This may prove its own undoing by the accumulation of so much nitrogen that it becomes toxic to the clover. As the plants die and the roots decay there is released an abundance of nitrogen which is quite stimulating to grass. If there is a sufficient foundation of grass plants in the lawn they may soon take complete possession, lasting until this nitrogen supply is diminished or exhausted, after which clover may come into the ascendancy again because it can take its own nitrogen from the air. In this way the clover-grass-clover cycle is started all over again.

In the light of the divergence of opinion on the subject of clover and its adaptability to lawns, there seems but one logical solution. Let those who like it sow it alone and not in a mixture. There is good reason for this recommendation.

First, the seeds of clover are heavier and of a different size than grass seed. It is difficult, therefore, to prepare a uniform mixture which will not in the process of handling result in the clover settling to the bottom of the package. Second, there are usually certain areas in the lawn where clover is wanted for special duty, for example to combat some weed or to fill in where grasses have failed. Third, clover should be sown only in the spring. When fall-seeded, the plants seldom reach a stage of development which permits them to survive the winter season.

Clover seeds are small and go a long way in sowing, thus one need purchase no more than a pound of pure Clover seed for about ten to fifteen pounds of grass seed. Since White Clover seed shows practically no loss in germinating ability under two years, it is safe to keep a small amount on hand for a seeding emergency.

OUR POSITION

In the past, a small amount of White Clover seed has been included in Scott's Regular Mixture—unless the purchaser specified that he did not want it. Now in order to serve both those who like Clover and those who do not, we have decided to omit it from the mixture and offer Clover seed separately. Upon request we will include the correct proportion in the mixture as before, without extra charge. Since White Clover is not adapted to shady places, we never include it in our Shade Mixture.

“Here is a suggestion for killing ants. Take an ordinary oil can, the one you use in oiling your lawn mower, fill it with any fly spray, shoot a squirt or so in each hole where the ants call home and they immediately put up a sign ‘Anty doesn’t live here any more’.”—E. H. MILES, Fort Atkinson, Wis.

Another Customer Finds Weeds In England

Dr. Harry P. Weld, a former citizen of Marysville, now head of the Department of Psychology at Cornell University, did some garden inspecting in Europe last summer. From London he wrote:

"We have visited many gardens and have seen the famous lawns of England. Most of them have weeds in them, which was a comfort to me."

English lawns have always been cited as examples of perfection. Moist air makes it easier to keep them green but weeds don't object to moisture either.

Skunks Feature In New Dandelion Story

Do skunks like dandelions? This question would not appear in an intelligence test but it was asked for a good reason by Mr. E. W. Tapley of Castine, Maine, who wrote *A* (below). Because we had never heard of Ohio skunks having a dandelion complex we wrote to the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station to find if our Ohio "cats" were behind the times. The reply, *B*. Later report by Mr. Tapley, *C*.

A. "I might say that my worst enemy last year was Mr. Skunk which indicates that my lawn was infested with dandelions. I dug them up as fast as possible but friend skunk would always find some I had overlooked."

B. "The skunk, concerning which you wrote in your letter of April 12th, was doubtless digging for white grubs, or other root-eating insects, in the lawn. So far as we know, skunks, in Maine as in Ohio, seek live game and not dandelion salad." (Maine Experiment Station.)

C. "I might add, regarding the 'Dandelion and Skunk' topic, that to my knowledge there is some sort of grub at the root of the dandelion or 'Arneca' as

it is called. (I believe there is a difference.) Mr. Skunk always leaves a cone shaped hole in the lawn and the plant which he has pulled up always lies beside it, so it isn't the plant he is after. Some of your LAWN CARE readers can give you the correct information. I do know that after a good moonlight night in midsummer, the lawn is very unsightly and perhaps you would agree with me that rather than shoot or trap a skunk on your front lawn, you would patiently repair the lawn. Yours for better lawns and less dandelions—" (E. W. Tapley.)

For grub control data please refer to Volume 2, No. 3, LAWN CARE.

Top-Dressing Applied in Spring is Helpful

"In this connection, as you have suggested ideas on distribution of fertilizer on lawns, would say that the writer has had more success in mixing fertilizer with some other material, when using a top-dressing in the spring. At that time of the year, lawns will frequently be benefited by a top-dressing of dirt anyhow and by using dirt that is not too wet, mixing some in a wheelbarrow, with the fertilizer, spreading on the lawn and then using the back of a rake, it accomplishes two purposes at one time. Where a clay sod is maintained, sand is very beneficial and can be used also with the dirt and any other material required, such as lime or swamp humus if procurable. In many country districts there is lots of pure black humus in swamps that can be taken out the fall before and allowed to freeze out when it becomes almost like flour. This is very beneficial to lawns and a fine substance to mix fertilizer with. I always spread a lot of good, rich soil on boards and let it dry out sufficiently to be quite free of moisture and then mix it with the fertilizing materials, for spring use."—C. R. ANDERSON, 916 Shore Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa.

Winter Injury to Trees

IN a recent bulletin published by the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, an article under the above title by R. P. White, Associate Plant Pathologist, appeared. We quote from it as follows:

"It is not surprising that the last two winters should have some influence on shade trees. Frost cracks were more common than in many years. Norway Maples were dying all last summer with no apparent cause except winter injury. Trees injured by winter are weakened throughout the growing season and as a result are more subject to attack by various diseases and insect pests. It has been repeatedly observed that well fertilized trees do not suffer from the summer drouth period and there is reason to believe that they also withstand with greater ease, the rigors of winter. Shade tree fertilization practices are not standardized, but it is generally recognized among arborists that a complete plant food containing nitrogen, phosphorus and potash is necessary. Some favor fall fertilization, some spring. Both will produce the desired results as has been repeatedly proved in general practice."

Scott's Turf Builder is an ideal tree food. It contains the correct ration of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash as well as the proper balance of organic and inorganic materials. *LAWN CARE* for September 1929 contains an account of tree feeding by the most approved method.

He Stoops to Conquer

"As your *LAWN CARE* contains very valuable hints I would like to pass one on for what it may be worth and should you desire to use it please omit my name.

"I have a clasp attached to my lawn mower handle in which I carry an asparagus knife and I find it very convenient when mowing the lawn to stoop and cut out an occasional weed."

Scott Publications

This issue of *LAWN CARE* is just one of a series of such bulletins published five times each year. Subscriptions are free to anyone interested. In addition you can obtain several other Scott publications on lawns, including the following:

Lawns—The amateur gardener's guide to better lawns. Condensed but very complete information on soils, fertilizing and seeding. Free.

Bent Lawns—A practical discussion of the most beautiful of all lawn grasses. Tells how to plant with either seed or stolons. Several natural color illustrations. Free.

Lawn Care—This is the thirty-fifth issue of these bulletins which have been published continuously since 1928. In previous numbers the following lawn problems have been discussed:

- 1928—Crab Grass, Dandelions.
- 1929—Moss, Grubs and Beetles, Chickweed, Buckhorn.
- 1930—Ground Ivy, Yarrow, Earthworms, Heal-all, Ants.
- 1931—Speedwell, Creeping Buttercup, Moles, Knot Grass.
- 1932—Sheep Sorrel, Quack Grass, Spurge, Trefoil, Goose Grass.
- 1933—Nimble Will, Knawel, Terraces, Shepherd's Purse, Chinch Bugs.
- 1934—Sedge, Shade, Purslane.
- 1935—Peppergrass, Shade, Crabgrass, Summer Injury to Turf.

Send 10 cents in coin or stamps for all back issues in a paper cover.

Lawn Care Binders

A loose-leaf binder of imitation leather containing all back issues of *Lawn Care* with an index, is available.

Kindly send 50 cents to partly defray costs. This binder will serve as a convenient file for all lawn information.

