



STOVER SEED®

Teaming confidence with nature since 1922

Technical Guide

PLANTING CLOVER SEED

INTRODUCTION

Clovers (genus *Trifolium*) comprise about 300 annual and perennial species in the pea family. They are legumes which have the ability to convert nitrogen from the air into the soil by way of root nodules. The converted nitrogen is a source of plant food reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers. Annual clovers may be plowed back into the soil as a nitrogen source (also referred to as “green manure”) for another crop.

Clovers have many uses that include livestock feed (hay, pasture and silage), cover crops, soil improvement, erosion control, honeybee pollination and in turfgrass mixtures. Clovers grow in a wide range of soils and climates and many species tolerate light shade, mowing and foot traffic.

Fun Fact: The four-leaf clover is a rare variation of the three-leaf clover which is why it is deemed to bring good luck. The frequency of four-leaf clovers to three-leaf is 1 in 5,000.

WHEN TO PLANT

Clover seed can be planted in either the autumn or spring but most spring plantings are in the northern part of the U.S. with more late summer to autumn plantings in the southern part. Another guideline to use is when night temperatures are above 40°F. Planting seed in high temperatures (90°+) can create weed, disease and germination problems.

SEED BED PREPARATION & WEED CONTROL

There are two methods of ground preparation, till and no-till. **If tilling**, remove all old vegetation and cultivate soil to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. It is recommended that an organic soil amendment be added to the soil to insure the development of a good root system and dense growth. Other amendments may be added at this time to adjust soil pH which should be between 6.0 and 7.0. A soil test may be advisable. Add lime to increase the pH or sulfur or organic matter to lower it.

Once the site has been prepared either irrigate or let rainfall germinate existing weed seeds that have been brought to the surface during tilling. It may take several weeks for weeds to germinate. Once the weeds have germinated kill them off with the herbicide glyphosate (commonly sold as RoundUp®) according to the instructions on the container. A more eco friendly alternative for weed control is through [soil solarization](#).

For no-till, mow down existing vegetation and irrigate to allow weeds to germinate and spray with herbicide or solarize as noted above.

If **seeding clover into an existing pasture** mow as low as possible and remove clippings to insure good seed-to-soil contact.

For **seeding into an existing lawn** see instructions on page 2.

SEEDING

Be sure that you measured your area correctly and sow the seed according to the coverage listed on the product label. With clover seed being very small it is recommended that a broadcast spreader be used to insure uniform coverage. Spreading the seed by hand is not recommended but if you must, mix the seed with some kind of weed free organic matter (seed cover mulch) or soil in order to insure even coverage. Start by using a light or low setting on your broadcast spreader to avoid applying too much seed. Keep in mind that it is much better to go over an area two or three times when seeding rather than seeding too heavily at the start and then running out of seed.

Rake the seed lightly so it settles into the soil then cover with a quality, weed free mulch for use as a seed cover. Seed should not be covered more than 1/4 inch. It is important that you create good seed-to-soil contact in order to achieve establishment.

Fertilizing is not recommended when planting clover seed.



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WATERING

This is the most critical step in seed establishment. It is very important that the surface be kept damp **AT ALL TIMES** during the germination period. Under optimal temperature and moisture conditions clover seed will germinate in 7 to 15 days. Should the surface be allowed dry out for only a short time, the tiny clover plants will die. Naturally, the surface will need to be watered several times a day on windy and/or warm days, while in cooler temperatures a couple times a day may be sufficient. Do not allow water to puddle or run off.

SEEDING INTO AN EXISTING LAWN

Dutch White Clover and Micro Clover are excellent choices for lawns. To seed into an existing lawn:

1. Mow lawn as short as possible, not more than 1/2 inch high.
2. Remove thatch and debris. Should you have a heavy layer of thatch built up, you will need to rent a vertical mower or renovator to remove it. It is very important that the seed come in direct contact with the soil.
3. Aerify if the soil is hard-packed. This can be done with an aerifying machine or a hand held tool that is stepped into the ground that extracts soil cores.
4. Sow seed according to the rate on the label.
5. Cover the seed with a weed free mulch.
6. Follow watering step above.

Note: If a weed problem exists, spray with glyphosate, wait one week, then follow steps 1-6.

THE THREE KEYS TO SUCCESS ON SEED ESTABLISHMENT:

- ◆ **Correct soil temperature**
- ◆ **Seed-to-soil contact**
- ◆ **Consistent light watering**

We guarantee that the seed we offer has been tested by a certified seed-testing laboratory and conforms to federal and state seed laws. We make no other guarantees, either express or implied. Because of varying factors beyond our control, there is no guarantee of establishment.

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