

**White clover thriving in lawns****July 18, 2014**

This year's wet weather has helped create a bumper crop of white clover in lawns and other turf areas, especially those that are under-fertilized turf. Once established, clover spreads by stolons and quickly invades thin turf. Clover is a legume and is competitive under low N conditions, so increasing annual N is best method for long-term control. The temptation is to apply herbicide now to control clover, but unfortunately applications during warm weather can cause damage to turf while providing less-than-effective control. Herbicides applied now are not as effective as fall applications, but control is adequate to justify applications made by professionals now. However, insure that the clover and grass are well-watered and not under stress. Avoid making herbicide applications when temperatures are above 80F because turf burn is likely and control will be less effective. Our herbicide recommendation table at <http://turf.unl.edu/herbratings.cfm> lists a number of products that will control, but 2,4-D alone will not control clover effectively. Many products can burn creeping bentgrass in the heat of summer, but Lontrel appears to be the safest for bentgrass. Also realize applications made now will have to be followed up with fall applications for most effective control of the stolons. The best overall strategy for controlling clover is to increase your annual fertilization combined with an application of a broadleaf herbicide in mid-October. Learn more about controlling clover and other weeds at the NTA Field Day on Wed July 23. Preregistration is still available until noon on Monday July 21 at <http://turf.unl.edu/2014NETurfAssociationAttendees.pdf>.

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The typical flower of white clover is common now in turf areas.



Trifoliate leaves of white clover.



Though initial white clover may have spread by seed, its stoloniferous growth habit allows it to quickly overtake a thin turf. Control is also made more difficult because herbicides usually do not translocate well through stolons.



Though the spring fertilizer application may not have been accurately applied in this picture, it's a perfect example of how white clover thrives in the under-fertilizer turf while not competing well in the (over-) fertilized turf around the perimeter.