



ask the landscape professional

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest.

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or
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Question of the Week: *Is there any way to deter the invasion of clover in my lawn? Even after mowing it is still so visible. My husband wants me to use "weed and feed" to get rid of it, but I'm looking for an organic solution, if possible. Thanks! - Meagan*

Linda's Answer: Using Weed and Feed products for any reason is a bad idea, especially to try to get rid of clover. Let me explain. Prior to World War II, white clover was part of everyone's lawn, but that all changed after the war when synthetic weed-killers were first introduced. An unfortunate side effect of those synthetic weed killers intended for dandelions and plantains and the like, was that they also killed clover. Chemical companies had no choice - to sell product to kill the weeds, they had to cast clover in a bad light. That began the marketing campaigns that persist to this day to classify clover as a "weed", something that interferes with the uniformity of a lawn. Absolutely nothing could be further from the truth. Clover is Mother Nature's "fertilizer factory"; it does an amazing thing called "fixing nitrogen" - clover takes nitrogen out of the air, converts it to a form plants can use and puts it into the soil so other plants, like grass, can use it. If you are lucky enough to have clover in your lawn, it's doing the fertilization for free. Clover generally shows up in poor soil and is nature's way of improving the soil. If you are applying organic fertilizers to your lawn, the clover will diminish over time as your soil improves. Clover in lawns has lots of advantages in addition to the main one of fixing nitrogen, so don't try to kill it.

- 1) It withstands drought well because it has deep roots. In the heat of the summer when grass goes dormant and turns brown, clover will stay green,
- 2) It is slow growing and needs cutting less often,
- 3) It resists diseases and insects, especially grubs,
- 4) When it flowers, it attracts bees - very important crop pollinators.
- 5) It will help control weeds in the lawn by filling in poor soil areas.

Don't believe the marketing hype coming from the chemical weed killer industry - clover is the best thing that ever happened to your lawn and clover seed is widely available for you to plant.



"Ask the Landscape Professional" articles are all on our website; if you missed any, go to www.SprigsandTwigs.net

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The Landscape Professionals

Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 19 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, an accredited NOFA Organic Land Care Professional, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation projects..

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