

## Starting a Clover Lawn

There are pure clover lawns and mixed grass clover lawns. For play areas and other higher traffic locations, mixed lawns are best. For low to moderate traffic areas, clover only may do fine. Pure clover lawns may take more effort to establish. Clover and grass are complementary and support one another. Springtime is best for seeding; however, it can also be seeded in fall. There are two starting points - bare ground and existing lawn.

### To mix clover in with an existing lawn:

- Grass should be cut short and bagged (only to prepare for clover seed).
- Rake up extra debris and clippings so that the tiny clover seed will reach the soil surface.
- Seeding recommendations are 60-245g/100m<sup>2</sup>. For clover to be dominant, use 245g/100m<sup>2</sup> (8oz/1,000sq. ft.) 454g of seed contains approximately 800,000 seeds.
- Since the seed is so small and difficult to sow evenly, it is suggested that it be mixed with soil, or graded sand (grain size approximately 1mm) for distribution in a broadcast spreader. Do **NOT** cover seed with a layer more than 0.6cm (¼") deep.
- If there is no clover present in the lawn or nearby, you may need to add a bacterial inoculant to promote the best growth. It can be mixed with the seed.
- Water daily for about ten days. At temperatures above 15°C, most seed will germinate in less than a week.
- Until established mow regularly at 3.75-5cm (1.5-2").

### For bare soil:

1. Rake the ground relatively flat.
2. Use about 230g/100m<sup>2</sup> (8oz./1,000 sq.ft.) if sowing only clover. 1lb of seed contains about 800,000 seeds. If seeding a mix of grass and clover, use approximately one part clover to 15 parts of appropriate grass seed. Usually, it is best to sow clover seed separately as it settles out and results in patchy areas.
3. Since the seed is so small and difficult to sow evenly, it is suggested that it be mixed with soil, or graded sand (grain size approximately 1mm) for distribution in a broadcast spreader. Do **NOT** cover seed with a layer more than 0.6cm (¼") deep.
4. If there is no clover in the vicinity, you may need to add a bacterial inoculant to promote the best growth. It can be mixed with the seed.
5. Water daily for about ten days. At temperatures above 15°C, most seed will germinate in less than a week.



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## FireSmart<sup>™</sup> BC Lawn Tips: Fire Risk & Drought



In recent years drought and watering restrictions are becoming more widespread across the province. Some areas are promoting 'golden' lawns to conserve water.

However, BC's wildfire seasons are becoming longer and more intense. One important benefit of a lawn is that it can be an excellent way to significantly reduce fuels. As a fuel break, it can break up a path for fire to spread, **BUT** only if the grass is **green**.

Try the following tips to conserve water AND have a **green** FireSmart lawn:

### Watering:

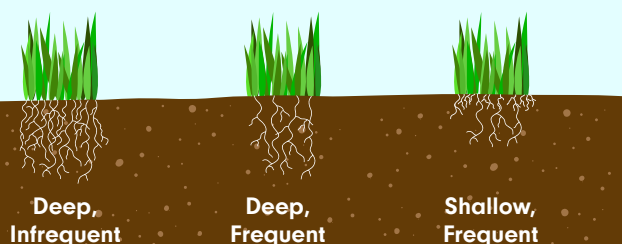
Water deeply but infrequently. It produces deeper, stronger roots that helps grass withstand longer periods between watering.

1. Try placing containers in several areas of each irrigation area and time how long it takes to collect an average of 2.5cm.
2. Water this length of time 1-2 times per week during the summer depending on soil conditions.
3. The time may be reduced by up to half during spring and fall.

Be sure to follow local watering restrictions.

### Water Methods

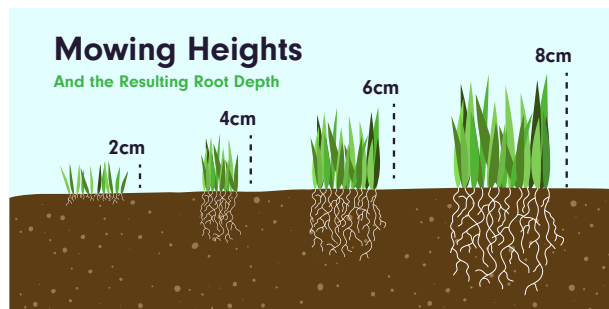
And the Resulting Root Growth



### Mowing:

Mowing height is important for grass health. The height of the grass leaves is about equal to the depth of the grass roots. Keep grass between 5 and 10cm. Longer grass shades the roots and helps reduce evaporation.

- If too short, grass will dry out more quickly.
- If too long, it will burn more intensely.



### Grass-cycling:

Leave grass clippings on the lawn if mowing **green** grass. This does not contribute to thatch (a result of overwatering and overfertilizing). The benefits:

- Returns valuable moisture back to the lawn since clippings are made up of up to 85% water if the grass is **green**.
- Provides about 1/3 of the lawn's nutrients as the grass decomposes, which can be quite fast.
- No bagging saves time and energy.



### Alternatives to traditional lawns:

If the previous tips are not enough to keep your lawn green when watering restrictions are in place, consider introducing clover into an existing lawn. Why are clover areas still green when areas that are just grass dry out?

- Clover has deeper roots that help it access moisture lower in the soil.
- Clover roots have nodules that produce nitrogen for itself and the grass around it.
- It grows well in poor soil.

### Other benefits:

- Aerates the soil
- Out competes most weeds
- Provides for pollinators
- Inexpensive and easy to establish (see instructions on the next page)
- Resistant to dog urine spots
- Soft to walk on

White Dutch Clover is one of the most popular choices, but there are micro-clovers if smaller leaves and flowers are preferred.

If you try all the tips offered and your lawn still goes brown and becomes a potential fire hazard, you may want to consider applying more xeriscaping principles and best practices. Xeriscaping is water conservation through creative landscaping. For instance, for the plant selection principle, there are other low water use groundcovers that are fire-resistant. Or, for the design principle, perhaps there are areas where hard surfaces like patios or pathways would make the space more functional.



Visit [FireSmartBC.ca/LandScaping-Hub](https://www.fire-smart-bc.ca/LandScaping-Hub) to see our chart of fire-resistant plants.