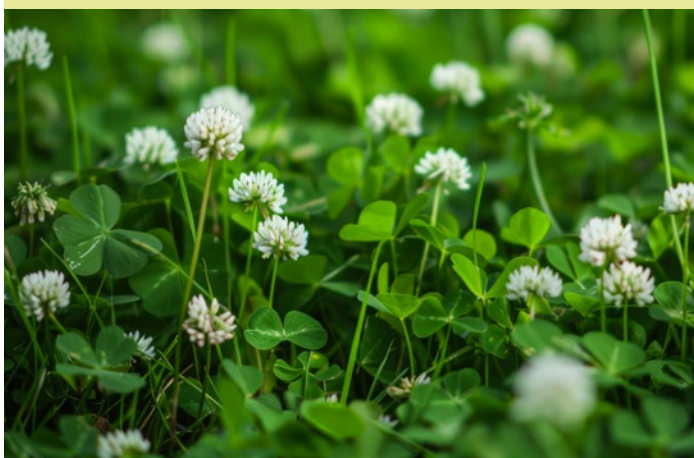


WHITE CLOVER

COVER CROP FACT SHEET FOR IOWA

White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), also called Ladino clover, is a perennial legume that is an effective cover crop for fixing nitrogen and reducing soil compaction. White clover tolerates heavy traffic areas, grows well in shade, and maintains a low profile.



Identifying Features

- » Palmately trifoliate leaf
- » Hairless leaves with a white 'v' variegation
- » Long petioles extend from stolon, no main stem

Cultural Traits

- » Perennial annual legume
- » Minimum germination soil temperature: 42° F
- » Cold temperature tolerance: -40° F
- » Seeding date: Early August to Early September* (F)***
- » Seeding date: Early April to Mid May* (S)***

Planting Information*

- » **Drill** at ¼ - ½ inch (5 lbs./acre PLS**)
- » **Broadcast** (7 lbs./acre PLS)
- » **Aerial** (8 lbs./acre PLS)

*Planting information from Midwest Cover Crop Council (midwestcovercrops.org). Refer to local NRCS office recommendations (Iowa Field Office Technical Guide, Section 4, 340 Cover Crop) for seeding dates and rates pertinent to location specific financial assistance program requirements.

**Pure Live Seed

***F=Fall S=Spring

Additional planting information:

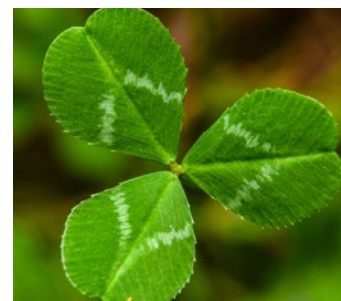
- » ~500,000 seeds/lb.
- » Increase seeding rate if using for forage/grazing.
- » Planting in a mixture can enhance performance as a cover crop.
- » Time interseeding to match cash crop growth and maturity to balance clover establishment and cash crop competition.
- » If growing for nitrogen production, consider using inoculation.



White Clover Seed
(Shown with seed treatment)



White clover sprout (U. of Missouri)



White clover leaf



White clover leaves

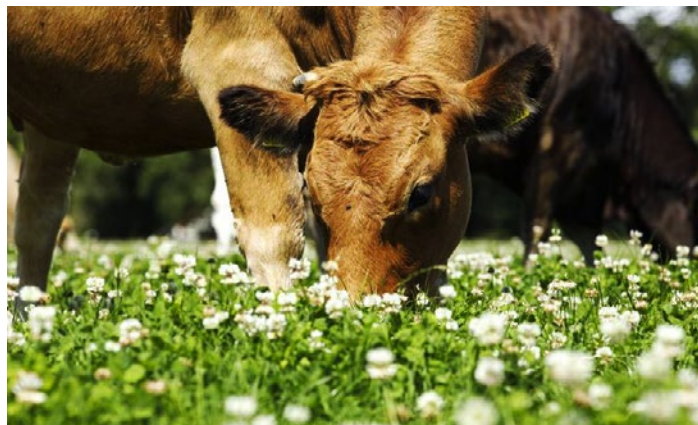
C:N (Carbon:Nitrogen) Ratio

- » White Clover 14:1

WHITE CLOVER COVER CROP FACT SHEET



White clover field (Stark Bros.)



Cattle graze white clover

Performance

Dry matter = 200 - 2,000 lbs./acre per year
(Biomass quantity is dependent on planting and termination dates and precipitation.)

Performance Ratings

» Cash crop interseed (<i>early vegetative</i>)	Fair
» Cash crop overseed (<i>late seed fill</i>)	Fair
» Grazing quality	Fair
» Mechanical forage harvest	Fair
» Nitrogen fixer	Good
» Nitrogen scavenger	Fair
» Weed suppression	Fair
» Compaction fighter	Good
» Erosion control	Fair
» Lasting residue	Fair
» Quick grower	Fair
» Drought tolerance	Fair
» Low fertility tolerance	Fair
» Shade tolerance	Fair

Additional Considerations

- » White clover can pose a bloat risk to livestock without careful grazing management.
- » White clover stores up to 45 percent of its N contribution in roots, more than any other legume cover crop.

White Clover



This fact sheet is a collaborative effort of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to provide cover crop options and information for Iowa landowners.