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Lawn Alternatives: Microclover

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I want to talk, again, about lawn alternatives.

I hate to beat the proverbial dead horse, but I'm going to keep hammering away at this topic until I see some change. See one of my previous articles about [alternative lawns](#). You can also type 'lawn' into the search function of this website to see other articles I've written advocating that we change our mindset about what lawn is.

These are changing times. Perhaps all times are changing ones, but recently, many parts of the country are faced with severe drought. Traditional lawn turf requires huge amounts of water (and fertilizer) to stay green. I realize we (the people) desire green lawns. We (the people) get disgruntled and defensive at the suggestion that we need to remove our precious turf grass lawns, because we LIKE them, and we WANT them.



Well, know what? Mother Nature, with all due respect, doesn't care what we like and want. She has her own ways, and she allows stuff to succeed or fail at her own whim. If we orchestrate our landscapes in tune with her rules and rhythms, we not only will have a good outcome, but we'll be preserving resources and returning rain / storm water to the watershed in more pristine condition. We just need to change some of our preconceived notions about landscaping and lawn.

Microclover® and Miniclover®

In previous posts, I have mentioned alternative lawn seed blends: [Pro Time Lawn Seed](#) and [Fleur de Lawn®](#). Today, I want to add microclover and miniclover. They are both variations of *Trifolium repens* (Dutch White Clover). For a great introduction of what this stuff is, watch this [video from Ohio State University Extension](#). Here is a [source for miniclover seeds](#) which is where to buy, but also gives a lot of great information about the clover's benefits. Fleur de Lawn includes microclover in its blend.

From what I can see, both products are pretty much the same. Micro may have slightly tinier leaves. Frequency of mowing affects leaf size, too. They both tolerate wetter and dryer soil conditions as well as a good deal of shade. You might remember one of my previous lawn posts noting that there were no weeds (or clover) in the shady section of my lawn. It would be great to get some clover going in shady areas, reducing the need to fertilize. And for those of you who still haven't embraced moss in their lawn, these clovers would help avoid that.

Wear tolerance is said to be better than for turf grass lawns.

These clovers take care of themselves, easing the amount of maintenance and expense normally thrown at traditional lawns. Clover's roots penetrate deeply reducing or eliminating the need for aeration. As with other legumes, these clovers fix nitrogen from the air into the soil so there is no need for additional fertilizer once established. Note that if your soil is deficient in P or K, you'll have to add that. And with nitrogen continually available, some turf grass diseases that arise from low N levels are eliminated. That means less use of pesticides, and healthier watershed.

What about cost? Well, yes, it will cost to renovate your current lawn over to clover or one of the eco-lawn: But once the new lawn is established, you will have much less maintenance cost because of less need for water, fertilizer, pesticide, and even less mowing frequency. Wouldn't you like to save your money and time for other things and have a green 'lawn' at the same time?

And clover is evergreen in our climate. Imagine not having to water (much or at all) in the our dry summertime. Your neighbors will praise your commitment to the environment, and they will envy your green lawn. :) Of course the choice is yours. Keep your traditional lawn. Or open your mind and learn the new principles that make our gardens and landscapes kinder to the planet.

Update!!!

Please read the [update](#) about high temperature intolerance of mini and micro clovers.

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