



Dutch White Clover



Creeping Thyme

**W**hile **non-native flowers** may be aggressive, they can still be very useful.

Dutch white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) are two species that benefit pollinators and will flower in a mowed lawn.

White clover provides additional nitrogen and tolerates drought, making it easy to grow in low maintenance conditions.

Dandelions and Creeping Charlie also benefit pollinators but are very aggressive and typically are not favored by homeowners.

**P**lanting a bee lawn is best in late fall as a dormant seeding, ideally when soil temperatures dip below 40°F.

Germination will not occur until the following spring when soil temperatures rise above 50°F.

Dormant seeding reduces pressure from surrounding weeds that may be competing for resources.

## MANAGING BEE LAWNS

**Mowing:** The one-third rule is a good guide: do not mow more than one-third of the vegetation at one time to a height between 3.5 and 4 inches to ensure that flowering plants survive and produce flowers to sustain pollinators.

**Watering:** Soil moisture should be monitored. White clover and fine fescue grasses are quite drought-tolerant but may need supplemental watering after several weeks with no rain.

**Fertilizing:** A soil test (visit [soiltest.cfans.umn.edu](http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu)) will determine if nutrients need to be added. Fertilizer requirements will be minimal if clippings are returned, mowing heights are kept high, and soil quality is good.

**Weeding:** Hand weeding is the preferred option, with spot treatments with selective herbicide as needed. Learn which weeds have value to pollinators, are diverse and add to a long flowering season for bees and other pollinators.

**Visit Bee Lawn Demo/Trial Plots at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, located near the shrub garden collection along Three-Mile Drive.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum**  
[arboretum.umn.edu/gardensandcollection.aspx](http://arboretum.umn.edu/gardensandcollection.aspx)

**University of Minnesota Bee Lab**  
[beelab.umn.edu/bees](http://beelab.umn.edu/bees)

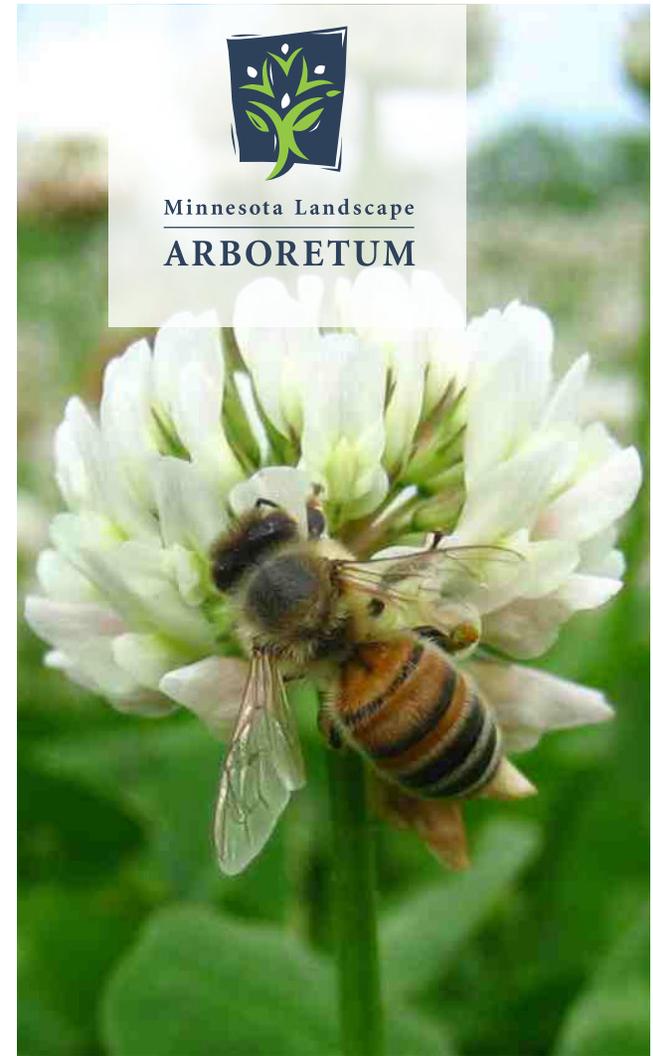
**University of Minnesota Turfgrass Science**  
[turf.umn.edu](http://turf.umn.edu)

**University of Minnesota Extension**  
[extension.umn.edu](http://extension.umn.edu)

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Minnesota Landscape  
**ARBORETUM**



## Bee Lawns Turf Grass with Flowering Plants



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## BENEFIT OF BEE LAWNS

Traditional lawns are ornamental or recreational plantings of turf grass that are mowed and managed.



A bee lawn features flowering plants as well as turf grasses, with these benefits to bees and pollinators:

- Natural diversity of forage for pollinators
- Less mowing, fertilizing and watering
- Beauty of flowers
- Increased resilience to extreme seasonal temperatures and drought



## ENHANCE YOUR LAWN TO PROMOTE POLLINATORS



A new bee lawn can be established from a seed mixture of grass and flowers or by seeding flowers into an existing lawn. Seeding into an existing lawn is less expensive but can be challenging to establish, as new flowers compete for space with grass. Good seed germination requires adequate moisture, good soil to seed contact and erosion protection. For best results, try scalping (mowing grass to 1 inch or less), aerating and then adding flower seed. Find information at: [beelab.umn.edu/bees](http://beelab.umn.edu/bees)

## GRASSES TO USE



**Native Fine Fescues** grow slowly and do not compete against bee-friendly plants. Fescues are main components of shady lawn mixtures but grow well in full sun. They tolerate drought

and low soil fertility, making them good choices for flowering lawns.

**Kentucky Bluegrass\*** establishes slowly, allowing non-native flowering plants to grow along with the lawn. It requires more intense management than fine fescue grasses.



\* The use of non-native species in a bee lawn does not meet Board of Water and Soil Resources native vegetation establishment and enhancement guidelines, and does not meet the project requirements of the ENRTF appropriation.

## NATIVE FLOWERS FOR BEE LAWNS

Results of research trials at the University of Minnesota show that the best native plants for lawns germinate quickly and adapt to the soil. Native species demonstrating potential include:

### Ground Plum

(*Astragalus crassicaarpus*)

A low-growing species in the pea family that is native and common to the prairies of Minnesota.



### Lanceleaf Tickweed

(*Coreopsis lanceolata*)

A late spring bloomer in the aster family.



### Lanceleaf Self-heal

(*Prunella vulgaris ssp. lanceolata*)

In the mint family, it is distributed widely in the United States and Europe. There are three self-heal subspecies: *ssp. vulgaris* is native to Europe and throughout North America, and *var. lanceolata* is native to Minnesota.



### Calico American Aster

(*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*)

A late blooming flower, typically grows around 3 feet tall. When mowed, calico aster will form small dense rosettes, blooming below a 3.5 inch cutting height.

