

# Unlucky shamrocks?

Everyone likes good luck. So why would anyone kill a shamrock in their lawn?

Finding a patch of clover in the lawn was considered lucky in the past. The clover enriched the soil with nitrogen and helped the entire lawn to grow better. Clover thrived in the summer heat when the rest of the lawn turned yellow.

I work with people from all over the world and they think clover—not to mention dandelions—add a bit of “sparkle” to the lawn.

But lawn care companies have convinced us to believe that lawns should be a thick green mat of pure grass. No “sparkles” allowed. So we use herbicides—poisonous chemicals—on our lawns to make sure no clover or other “weeds” are in it.


There is no right or wrong here. It’s okay to use pesticides to kill clover (hey, I’m Irish and maybe I’m too sensitive about killing shamrocks). But if you are going to kill clover, be smart about it.



Limit your use of weed killers to autumn (late September), when herbicides are most effective. If you spray in autumn, the weeds will naturally transport the herbicide down into its roots, killing the entire plant. Summer is a bad time to spray since you can stress your grass, which is already under stress from heat.

Trimec (with dicamba, a very powerful herbicide) or triclopyr will kill clover. Use a *spray* formulation since weed-and-feed *granules* will drop off the weak clover leaves before the chemicals are absorbed through the leaves.

You can minimize weed problems by keeping the turf healthy and mowing tall. A healthy, tall turf will naturally choke out emerging weeds.

Nobody likes a weedy lawn, but try to tolerate a few weeds in the grass. It’s more natural and safer—and a few sparkles in the grass can be colorful! 

**NDSU**  
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