

Your weeds are trying to tell you something

BY ADRIAN HIGGINS
The Washington Post

Weeds are more than unsightly in a lawn. They are spotlighting your turf mistakes. By identifying common weeds, you can figure out the conditions that are promoting them. Without fixing the underlying problem, you can expect them to appear again all too soon, negating the hard work spent restoring the lawn this fall.

■ Weed: **White clover**

Problem: Poor, acidic soil

Fix: Correct fertilizing will help turf bully out the clover, which is deep rooted and difficult to remove. Large stands of clover can be tilled and reseeded, but will eventually return without a program of turf fertilizing and liming based on soil test results.

■ Weed: **Broadleaf plantain**

Problem: Dry, compacted soil.

Fix: Till, rake or aerate soil before reseeding, adding organic matter to the mix.

■ Weed: **Crabgrass**

Problem: Poor, dry soil. Thin turf.

Fix: Apply a pre-emergent crabgrass killer next spring, when the forsythia is in bloom. In large infestations, renovate the turf by aeration and overseeding.

■ Weed: **Wiregrass or bermudagrass**

Problem: Compacted soil. Thin turf.

Fix: Pull runners, aerate or rake soil, and reseed.

Always mow the lawn at the highest possible setting on the mower so the taller turfgrass will shade out low-growing wiregrass.

■ Weed: **Common blue violet**

Problem: Poorly drained turf

Fix: Aerate the turf and add a one-inch layer of humus and sand, mixed, before overseeding. Consider laying a drain pipe to divert storm water to garden beds or other suitable outlet. Or convert the affected turf into a shrub and flower bed, installing plants that tolerate moist soil.

■ Weed: **Ground ivy**

Problem: Moist, compacted soil in shady conditions

Fix: Same as violet



Traverse City's Friendly Garden Club is hosting their 21st Annual Summer Garden Walk. Five residential gardens on or near South Lake Leelanau will on display Thursday, July 17 from noon to 8 p.m., rain or shine. Tickets will contain garden maps and are \$5 in advance and \$7 the day of the walk. Tickets are available at local garden centers or from club members. Proceeds go toward local beautification projects such as the logo garden at Traverse City's Open Space and the Children's Garden at the Traverse Area District Library. For tickets, contact Sonja McGettrick at 946-5315. For other information, contact Cathy Hamilton at 946-1015.

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