

Management Practices to Maximize Durana White Clover Performance & Persistence in Wildlife Food Plots

Rackmaster Durana white clover is the premier white clover on the market for wildlife food plots. Durana was developed specifically to persist under heavy grazing pressure, be more drought tolerant, more tolerant of acidic soils and compete aggressively with weeds and grasses. Durana is persistent, productive and highly favored by deer, turkey, and numerous other game and non-game wildlife species. While Durana is tolerant of low management situations often found in food plots, stand life and performance is optimized by implementing some simple and basic management practices.

Maintain soil fertility - Maintaining soil fertility begins with a good soil test analysis. Newly established food plots should be sampled annually for the first three years to closely monitor soil pH and soil nutrient content. Once pH and soil fertility have reached adequate levels, soil sampling every 3 years should be sufficient to monitor soil nutrients. For best results, collect soil samples at approximately the same time each year. Late summer or early fall is considered best. Cores or slices of soil should be collected down to a uniform depth (from ground surface down to a 6" depth). An adequate number of cores or slices of soil should be collected and mixed together to insure the sample is representative of the entire food plot. Apply lime to maintain a soil pH of 6.2 to 6.5. Add phosphorous and potassium fertilizer according to soil test recommendations. Only fertilizers containing zero or small percentages of nitrogen (5% or less) should be used on pure stands of clover. Excessive application of nitrogen fertilizer leads to poor nitrogen fixation, increased incidence of clover disease and greater weed competition. The local university extension office or farm supply dealer can assist with soil sampling supplies, processing and analysis.

Periodically mow the plots - Periodically mowing Durana clover food plots helps maintain clover health and productivity and keeps unwanted weeds and grasses in check. When mowing, set the mower to remove no more than the top 1/3 of the clover foliage. With 2/3 of the foliage remaining and adequate soil moisture, the clover quickly recovers with new succulent forage growth. Note that taller broadleaf weeds may have 50% or more of their foliage removed by the mowing operation. This proves advantageous as it leads to slower regrowth recovery of the weeds and allows the faster recovering clover to better compete for space, nutrients and soil moisture.

Chemical weed and grass control - Broadleaf weeds including pigweed, ragweed, coffeeweed and others may become problematic in food plots as well as weedy grasses such as crabgrass, signalgrass, panicums, johnsongrass, etc. If a height differential exists between weeds and the clover, glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup) can be applied with a wiper or rope-wick type of device to weeds growing above the clover canopy. Care should be taken to prevent the herbicide mixture from coming into contact with the clover foliage. A selective herbicide that only controls grassy weeds can be broadcast over pure clover stands to kill or suppress numerous annual and perennial grasses without harming the clover. Extension weed control recommendations in some states include the use of low rates of 2,4-D amine (1pt/A or less) on well established stands of perennial white clover to control/suppress many broadleaf weeds when they are less than 3 inches in height. (Consult with the local university extension office for local herbicide recommendations and rates.) To minimize clover injury, herbicides should be applied when clover is free from drought and heat stress.

Control damaging insects - While Durana is quite tolerant of feeding damage by many insect species, heavy infestations of foliage feeding worms can severely damage stands especially during the summer months. Because of this, food plots should be monitored at least every 2-3 weeks throughout the summer months for worm presence. If worms are found and foliage feeding damage is significant, an appropriate insecticide should be applied. The local university extension office can provide information on treatment thresholds and recommended insecticides.

When using pesticides, carefully read and follow all label guidelines for mixing and applying. If applying herbicides, extreme care should be taken to avoid overlapping the spray and to also prevent herbicide drift or accidental application to any desirable plants, trees and shrubs adjacent to the target area being sprayed.



More information on taking soil samples is available in the Wildlife section under the Knowledge Center tab on the Pennington forage and wildlife website. To learn more about Durana white clover and Pennington's full lineup of premium wildlife food plot seed products or to locate your nearest Pennington dealer, visit the website at www.pennington.com or call 1-800-285-SEED.