

# Foundation Fact Sheet

## Why Use More Clovers In Woodland Roadways, Conservation Lands & Restoration Efforts

Clovers have been under study in experimental plots during the last three seasons on Sam Shine Foundation conservation lands in Floyd and Clark county Indiana. This effort began because the characteristics of clovers appear to benefit conservation land practices well. The following general comments summarize findings.

**Question In General (What we want to discover):** Should clovers be used more exclusively in conservation lands, wildlife habitats, or restoration projects?

Clovers are widely used in agricultural settings and by huntsman in food plots. Clovers may have an equally important role in conservation and restoration efforts.

### 5 Reasons Why Clovers Should Be Used More In Conservation & Restoration Projects

1. Clovers are natural nitrogen factories through nitrogen fixation. Nitrogen produced by clovers will be released when plant material decomposes into the soil. So, when clover leaves fall seasonally, the organic matter is natural fertilizer. Nearby plant communities benefit from the presence of clover because of nitrogen production and the overall soil nutrient load increases.
2. Clovers are outstanding soil conditioners and green mulches. Diverse clover mixes provide a fantastic soil cover throughout most of the year, adding organic mass, and providing a desirable environment for the wonderfully interconnected beneficial soil bacteria and invertebrates.
3. A well mixed clover plot benefit pollinator species throughout most of the season. Trifolium incarnate have the largest, earliest, but shortest bloom cycle. Even though the cycle is short for crimson clovers, it blooms at a critical time, well before most other native bloom cycles.
4. Clovers provide fantastic protein sources for wildlife during winter and early spring. The average protein available to wildlife that consume clover plants is 10%. Protein is difficult to find for herbivores and some omnivores during winter and early spring. *Further, multiple coveys of quail have been observed using field margins of Trifolium incarnate as cover.*
5. Clovers reduce undesirable woody stem succession and unwanted weed growth. This means considerably less mowing (CO2 emissions) once plots are established. \*\*Minor herbicide use may be necessary in mature clover plots to maintain unwanted grass growth\*\*.



Top left image: Crimson clover, which ironically looks more red (*Trifolium incarnate*)  
Top right image: Red clover, which ironically looks more crimson (*Trifolium pratense*)



Image above: White clovers mix