

# Chasing Creeping Charlie

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Note: This information is collected from the Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory at Purdue University, the New York State Nursery and Landscape Association and the Plant Identification Laboratory at Cornell University.

Herbicides alone are not effective. Because of the thick network of stolons and rhizomes, which cause the plant to propagate, herbicides do not readily translocate through the plant and into that root system; consequently despite attempts at chemical eradication, Creeping Charlie continues to spread aggressively.

The best control is achieved by the following:

- Mow the lawn when the grass is 3" or taller. A grass which is not scalped below 3" will crowd out most weeds.
- Creeping Charlie produces a lavender-blue flower. Use a broadleaf herbicide in spring right after flowering and again three or four weeks later. Repeat the application in fall between September 15 and October 15 and again three to four weeks later. These applications will be needed many successive years.
- Fertilize in fall to thicken the grass stand. Like high mowing, thicker lawns crowd out weeds.
- Regular overseeding in the fall will thicken the stand even more.
- A healthy lawn is the best defense against weeds in general so fertilize as recommended on lawn fertilization packages.
- Vigorous and frequent raking helps to break up the Creeping Charlie colony. Because it is such a difficult weed to eradicate, most people just learn to live with it. They say they enjoy it as a lush green groundcover and enjoy the small blue flowers when they bloom.

Strong herbicides can be applied. They will kill Creeping Charlie and the surrounding lawn as well as any plants onto which some droplets land. Reseeding may not be quickly successful. Soil scientists are finding that even Round-up remains in the soil longer than its manufacturer (Monsanto) claims.



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