

Oxalis and bur clover in dichondra can be killed by spraying with monuron. There are several commercial formulations of this material, so follow directions as to rate and frequency. Time of application is also important.

Annual bluegrass, crabgrass, bermuda, or other grasses can be eliminated from dichondra by using one of two chemicals. The first of these is Dowpon. For the annual grasses, use 2 ounces applied in water to 1,000 square feet of area. Bermuda and other perennial grasses are best controlled with spot applications using  $\frac{2}{3}$  ounce in a gallon of water to wet the foliage. Repeat the application about one week after any new green growth may appear.

The second material for controlling grasses and other narrow-leaved weeds in dichondra is diphenamid, sold under several trade names. For the annual grasses, use 10 pounds of actual material per acre (7 ounces of a 50% material per 1,000 square feet). If bermudagrass is present use double the rate and repeat the application about one week after any new green growth may appear.

Both of these materials are slow-acting, so it may be a couple of weeks before results will appear. For controlling annual grasses, it is preferable to treat in the fall of the year before the annual grasses germinate or become well established. For greatest effectiveness against bermudagrass, the weather must be warm and the bermuda growing well, as in the spring.

When crabgrass is the only weedy grass, Betasan, or dichondra preparation of lead arsenate, or Zytron may be used in January or February before the crabgrass germinates.

When most crabgrass seed has already germinated apply disodium methyl arsonate (liquid and dry preparations are available under several trade names). One to 3 applications 5 to 7 days apart will kill crabgrass without injury to dichondra. For best results apply before crabgrass goes to seed, usually in August.

Spot killing of all weeds (as well as the dichondra) may be accomplished with the use of a new chemical, dimethyl arsenic acid, sold as Kilz-All or Weed-Out. For the bermuda and other deep-rooted perennial grasses, repeat applications about three to four weeks apart will be required. This chemical is safe to use beneath shrubs and trees and replanting may be done after 5 days.

The manufacturer of a product combining the herbicides diphenamid and trifluralin reports that this material will control prostrate spurge in dichondra but this has not been tested by the author.

## *How to Grow Dichondra*

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Choose dichondra for planting only lawns that receive little wear from foot traffic. This is especially true in heavy soil that compacts easily if walked on when wet. Do not attempt to grow dichondra when drainage is very poor, if irrigation water is excessively saline or if soil is extremely alkaline. It is not the most economical lawn by far, nor is it in any way a "lazy man's" lawn.

Dichondra easily survives 25 degrees but may be damaged if walked on when the leaves are frozen. It is a marginal choice in areas that regularly have temperatures below 20 degrees but can survive 12 degrees with only some leaf browning. All the leaves will be killed at temperatures of 8 to 12 degrees and the whole planting will be killed if the soil freezes from 2 to 4 inches deep.



Cool season grasses probably make a better lawn in the cold, foggy coastal region from Santa Cruz County northward. In the desert dichondra thrives best in part shade but in most of Southern California and the Central Valley it grows equally well in sun and part shade. However, in full sun it will need more frequent watering.

#### PLANTING NEW LAWNS

You may plant either seed or plugs but soil preparation is similar and the same as for grass lawns. After establishing the rough grade and sloping the lawn to provide surface drainage, add a layer of composted humus to the soil. If the soil is poor add more humus, up to 4 inches. If the soil is alkaline apply a soil acidifier composed of sulphur and iron and aluminum sulfate to bring the pH down to between 5 and 6. Using a rotary tiller, mix the humus and acidifier into the upper 6 inches. Water the soil thoroughly to settle and before establishing the final grade install a sprinkler system.

Seed the dichondra at the rate of 1 pound per 1000 sq. ft. or cut flats of dichondra into 1 inch squares and plant about 6 inches apart. If you want faster coverage plant closer. Dichondra seed will germinate faster and plugs will spread quicker in hot weather. Best time for planting is from April to August. Seeding is the preferred method. Seeds germinate in one to two weeks in warm weather and completely cover in 6 to 8 weeks.

If the seed bed cannot be kept constantly moist until the seed germinates by continual watering several times a day it may be covered with a thin layer of a coarse organic mulch to hold water adjacent to the seed continuously. With a mulch, a morning and evening sprinkling will suffice to keep seed moist.

Formerly the only way to keep weeds out of freshly planted dichondra was by the arduous task of hand weeding, or by the expensive methods of using preplanting chemicals that partially sterilized the seed bed. With the advent of diphenamid an effective weed control for newly-planted dichondra was available. It is used both as a weed killer alone or mixed in various fertilizers and is applied before or after seeding with no damage to dichondra.

#### PLANTING IN OLD LAWNS

Dichondra can be established in grass lawns by spraying the area with dalapon according to directions. In about 10 days when the grass begins to die it can be raked off and the dichondra planted in the roughened seed bed. It will take over in about 2 months if the seed is kept moist until it germinates and given adequate water and fertilizer.

#### FERTILIZING

Young dichondra leaves are curled into the shape of a funnel. These may hold pelletized fertilizers which make a highly concentrated solution when wet and if not washed out become more and more concentrated as the water evaporates. If a soluble dry fertilizer is used a severe foliage burn may result.

The extreme sensitivity of dichondra to salt also poses a problem, especially when metropolitan Los Angeles water or Colorado River water is used to dissolve soluble fertilizers. This water contains about 800 parts per million of salt. Add to this the 1200 p.p.m. provided by a soluble fertilizer and you approach the threshold of salt injury when concentrations reach 2000 p.p.m. Thus liquid plant foods, natural organics or slow-release fertilizers are favored for dichondra. New planting should not be fertilized until they are 6 weeks old but established plantings require 50 pounds of a 4-4-4 natural organic per 1000 sq. ft. once a month or 10 pounds of a 20-16-6 slow release material.





Atkinson, Robert E. 1964. "How to grow Dichondra." *Lasca leaves* 14(Summer 1964), 65–66.

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