

Lucky fourth leaf: Mutation in clover DNA still a mystery

So you lost your job and your life's a mess. You're fat, you're broke, you're bad at sex. You're looking at your dog, hoping she doesn't die next. You need to get lucky. And what's the best way to get lucky? No, it's not finding a four-leafed clover on St. Patrick's Day. That kind of luck doesn't exist. What you need to do is go impress a bunch of drunk strangers with your knowledge of four-leaf clover genetics!

Like every other trait on every other living thing, a clover's lucky fourth leaf sprouts from DNA. But the clover genome is surprisingly complicated, and finding the genes responsible—and under what conditions—for the four-leaf mutation is a still-unsolved biological puzzle.

There are over 300 different species of clover, but the type most associated with the rare fourth lucky leaf is the widespread white clover (so named because of the fluffy, [delicious-looking](#) white blossoms). “It's like having a cat with an extra claw. We know it has a genetic basis, and a mutation that happens at a slow but regular frequency,” says Wayne Parrott, who studies crop genetics at the University of Georgia. His lab has come closest to finding the genetic roots of the four-leaf mutation. “We know more or less where it is on the chromosome,” he says. But the clover seems to have done everything possible to make its genome inscrutable.

Read full, original article: [The mysterious genetics of the four-leaf clover](#)