

Lawn Care

A discussion of the vital problems of lawn making and maintenance

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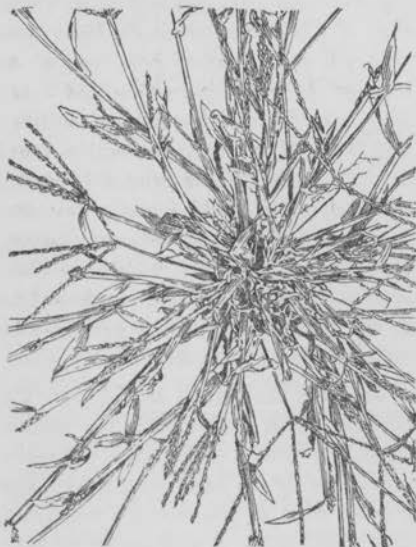
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King of the Fall Pests



CRAB GRASS

AT about this time of year our mail is full of letters about crab-grass. How will I get rid of it? Where does it come from? Will Bent or any other grass keep it out? Here are a few facts about this trouble maker taken from an Experiment Station publication:

*"The seeds of this grass must be very long lived for though it is never sown, let the ground be cultivated and as a general thing crab-grass will be there. * * * The seeds of crab-grass are very nutritious, and in Germany and Poland*

they are used for a table viand, cooked in milk, like sago. [There is a thought.] MEANS OF CONTROL. In lawns the grass must be hand-pulled, for the pieces scattered by the lawn mower are likely to take root and increase the pest. But if the plant is not allowed to develop seed, two or three seasons of careful weeding should clean it from the soil."

Crab-grass is one of the worst weeds golf clubs have to contend with on putting greens and we find this comment in a bulletin published at Washington:

"The surest way to rid the ground of crab-grass is to pull the plants by hand during June and July. After that the plants have become large enough to injure your soil for during August they begin to produce seed. Crab-grass is a short-lived plant, appearing rather late in the spring and dying with the first frost. It is a rapid grower, however, and will quickly become uncontrollable if it is not attacked in its younger stage."

Other facts about crab-grass:

"The seed may be introduced into lawns in manure that is not thoroughly rotted."

"When lime is applied to soil it creates a condition favorable to the growth of clover and weeds, particularly crab-grass."

"Crab-grass is known by these other English names: Water-grass, Finger-grass, Polish millet, purple or large crab-grass."

While obviously it is too late this fall to remove crab-grass from a lawn at the most vulnerable period, the information will be helpful for the coming year. We shall make it a point to remind our friends in the summer issue of *LAWN CARE* for 1929 that June and July are the proper months to put crab-grass out of business.

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Dig Out Plantain Now

WE are indebted to Mr. G. A. Helgert, of Milwaukee, for this timely thought: "During the month of August [and we imagine September too] plantain is very loosely anchored and can be easily pulled out by hand."

If anyone else has been particularly successful in combating plantain we shall be glad to learn of his methods.

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Lawn Care Just in Time

SAYS Mr. Fred D. Fenker, Clerk of the Board of Education at Rocky River, Ohio: "In this morning's mail I received your initial number of *LAWN CARE*. This could not have reached me at a more appropriate time as I have a problem facing me on which I shall appreciate receiving your advice." Mr. Fenker's trouble was crab-grass. He had been told that if he would sow white clover in September it would keep out the crab-grass next summer. We fear this advice is from a rather optimistic source for the reason that white clover is more apt to winter-kill when sowed in the fall. Furthermore since the crab-grass has already gone to seed it is very apt to appear again next season. Even so we believe it pays to dig out the stuff, give the lawn a good dose of Sulfate of

Ammonia and resow the thin spots with lawn seed. For such a purpose we recommend our Regular Mixture.

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Revamping an Old Lawn

NO one can be blamed for not wanting to tear up a lawn that is in fairly good condition. The problem of most home owners is to improve an existing lawn and make the best of it. However, if a lawn was originally built upon poor soil it is a rather hopeless task to attempt through top-dressing and fertilizing ever to make an entirely satisfactory lawn. Money and time will be saved in the long run if the ground is spaded up, good top-soil added and a new seed bed prepared. It is not an expensive undertaking to spade up a medium sized lawn and remake it. If the work is done in the fall a new stand of grass can be established in a very short time.

To make the best of an old lawn, dig out the weeds and scratch the surface vigorously with a sharp rake. If necessary spade up the bare spots, if any, and prepare them as you would a new lawn. Use sifted ashes or sand on heavy soils. Thoroughly rotted manure may be raked in but be sure that it is *rotted* and not full of weeds. Manure that is more than a year old should be perfectly safe. Bone-meal is very good for this enriching as is sheep manure, Ammonium Sulfate, Scott's Turf Builder, or any other fertilizer that is reasonably high in nitrogen. Re-seed the thin parts of the lawn at the rate of about one to two pounds of seed per thousand square feet depending upon the condition of the grass. A light raking after the seed is sown will be helpful as will a rolling. Many plants will die out each year so that a light resowing in the spring or fall, preferably fall, is necessary.

We are often asked if our Bent Mixture is good for resowing an old lawn. Very satisfactory results have been obtained in this way but in the states other than those along the Atlantic or Pacific coast we believe our Regular Lawn Mixture will do fully as well. In this mixture are three strains of Bent and another very excellent variety for open places as well as shade, *Poa Trivialis*. Kentucky Blue Grass predominates.

Rate of Sowing Seed

ONE of the questions we are called upon to answer most frequently is, "How much seed shall I sow?" If a pure, chaff-free mixture is used, four pounds per thousand square feet should be sufficient on new ground. Golf Clubs usually sow about 150 pounds of seed per acre which would be slightly less than four pounds per thousand. A little thicker seeding is desirable for spring sowing than for fall because the grass is less inclined to spread out. For the resowing of an old lawn two pounds of Scott's Lawn Seed per thousand square feet should be ample. If the grass is only thin in spots half this amount would probably suffice. There is no doubt but that seed *can* be sowed too thickly.

Fall Fertilizing

ORDINARILY it is best to apply fertilizer to a lawn in the spring for the reason that you are getting the grass in condition to survive the trying summer months. Stimulation of grasses in the fall is not as necessary. However, if an organic rather than chemical fertilizer is used the action is quite slow. The result is that plant food is stored up in the soil which will benefit the

grass even after the ground thaws out in the spring. Scott's Turf Builder is sixty per cent organic and for that reason its use in the fall as well as in the spring is justified. Except on Bent lawns and for the specific purpose of discouraging weeds the use of Ammonium Sulfate in the late fall is questionable practice.

Poison for Lawns

THE September number of *Garden and Home Builder* contains an article by R. B. Leach of the U. S. Department of Agriculture which advocates the application of five pounds per thousand square feet of Arsenate of Lead to a new seed bed. It is claimed that grubs will be kept out of the lawn for at least two years and that weed seeds already in the ground will be destroyed. We recommend the reading of this article. It is our purpose to give the idea a trial and the outcome of our experiment will be reported in a subsequent issue of *LAWN CARE*.

Late Mowing

FOR the last fall mowing of a lawn the blades should be set high. Close cutting at a time when the grass has practically stopped growing makes the lawn more subject to winter-killing. We are convinced that the way grass is mowed has much to do with its excellence. Frequent and close mowing in the early spring and summer encourages the grass to spread and thicken. Higher cutting during the hot summer and fall provides more protection to the roots from the burning sun. There is some difference of opinion as to the advisability of using a catcher or letting the clippings fall. If the grass is long the clippings should be removed by all means. During the wet weather they should also be caught because they rot on the ground



and often smother the grass. At other times there is some advantage in letting the clippings fall. They have fertilizing value and during very hot weather afford protection to the grass roots.



A Cleveland Compliment

NUMBER 1 LAWN CARE has been received and very carefully read. The writer compliments you upon this very valuable and instructive house organ. We shall look forward to future numbers and wish to congratulate you upon this method of giving service to customers and prospective customers."

Clarence A. Wolfram & Associates
Insurance Service
Cleveland, Ohio.

We are grateful to Mr. Wolfram as well as to the host of other friends who have expressed their hearty approval of this new publication.



Should Lawns be Covered in Winter

ACCORDING to a majority of opinions, NO. In speaking of a cover we have in mind leaves, manure, straw or anything used primarily as a protection. Golf clubs frequently cover a bent green by giving it a top dressing of one-fourth inch of screened soil or compost. This may also be done to a lawn with the thought of protecting the roots of the grass from undue exposure. The top soil itself will be helpful and the grass may not heave as much as it might otherwise. It isn't considered good practice, however, to place a complete covering over a lawn because the grass may be encouraged to grow at a time when according to nature's plan it should be dormant. An application of well rotted manure early in the spring before the frost is out of the ground is not a bad plan.

Professor George M. McClure, of Ohio State University, expresses himself on this subject as follows: "Whether or not such a procedure is advisable depends to a great extent upon the kind of weather during the winter months. If the winter is an open one without much snow and with occasional warm sunshiny days, a covering of material such as straw or manure will tend to promote some growth, which later will be adversely affected by freezing. * * * In the latitude of Central Ohio I have always felt that a good top-dressing with a mixture of well-rotted compost and sand is better than a covering of manure, straw or leaves."



Leaves for Protection

MR. ROBERT RAMSEY, of New York City, asked us recently what we thought of allowing leaves that had fallen, to remain on the grass over the winter. Our advice was to rake or sweep the leaves off when dry. Wet leaves mat so tightly that they keep air from getting to the grass and it is apt to be smothered out. Such a covering would be especially bad for new grass and it was a brand new lawn Mr. Ramsey was making. It takes leaves so long to decompose that no fertilizing benefit could possibly result simply by allowing the leaves to remain on the grass through the winter months.



Plantain Killer

MR. FRED NESSLY, clear out in Seattle, reads LAWN CARE and sends this suggestion for putting Plantain out of business: "I dip a sharpened hardwood stick into sulphuric acid and thrust it into the center of the plantain. It kills the roots immediately and does not injure the grass. Several weeds may be killed before it is necessary to dip it again." Thank you, Mr. Nessly.