

# Lawn Care

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## KNAWEL

*Other Names*—German Knot-Grass.

*Annual and Winter Annual*—Propagates by seeds.

*Seed Time*—May to November.

*Range*—Eastern United States and Canada from Quebec to Florida and as far inland as Ohio.

*Habitat*—Lawns, gardens and along roadways.

Here is a persistent little weed and just inconspicuous enough to gain headway before its presence is observed. It blooms and produces seeds from early spring until late fall. The seeds of Knawel are abundant and long lived. If undisturbed in the soil they will retain their vitality for several years.

The roots of Knawel are tough and fibrous. They send up a number of slender, light green, fork-branched stems which are from three to six inches long. These stems, as the illustration indicates, spread in all directions. Usually the stems are hairy yet sometimes smooth, some erect and some prostrate. The leaves are quite small, awn-shaped, and approximately one-third inch in

length. The seeds are light, straw colored, pointed at one end and diverging into five points at the other.

During the year 1932 we received more specimens of Knawel for identification than during the previous three. It may have been a season peculiarly favorable to its growth or it may be that lawns in general are being watched more closely for weeds of all kinds.

### Control of Knawel

Individual plants are easily removed with a spud or trowel. Knawel should be discovered early enough to prevent seed production. As this is its most important method of reproduction, the plants should be destroyed before the seed

heads appear. Later treatment involves mowing closely, collecting and destroying the clippings obtained from the infested area. It is also possible to destroy the plants by making applications of carbolic acid or other acids upon the roots by means of a machine oiling can. This method, of course, kills the weed with the least defacement to the lawn.

One authority suggests that carbolic acid, the prescribed remedy for Knawel,



KNAWEL (*Scleranthus Annus*)

is difficult to obtain and not safe for use by the average layman. "Gasoline," suggests this gentleman, "is just as effective as carbolic acid and may also be applied with a squirt oil can."

Others have used a pinch of ammonium sulphate, iron sulphate or nitrate of soda. Besides acting as weed killers when placed on the crown of the plant, the ammonium sulphate and nitrate of soda serve as fertilizer for the grass.

## Misfit Mixtures

A New York Experiment Station bulletin of November 1927, reveals some interesting things about lawn mixtures. Various brands selling in greatest volume at retail were analyzed and the findings published.

Eighty-eight mixtures were tested, and here is the amazing thing: in twenty-six Timothy was the predominating variety. In exactly the same number Redtop was the favorite. Next came Rye Grass, first in twenty mixtures. Seventy-two of the eighty-eight mixtures gave preference to a quick growing grass, good for a season but not one of the three a *turf* producer. Kentucky Bluegrass, which should comprise approximately fifty per cent of a good lawn mixture, was preferred in but ten of the eighty-eight mixtures and in practically each of the ten an excessive amount of some other variety was used to offset the Bluegrass advantage.

The reason for this is, of course, that Timothy, Redtop and Rye Grass are all much cheaper than Bluegrass. It is pretty safe to assume that if a lawn mixture is prepared to sell at a low price it shouldn't be expected to produce a fine lawn.

## Nurse Crop Unnecessary

We quote from F. F. Rockwell, landscape architect and well-known author of books on horticulture:

"Nurse crops, such as oats or rye, are sometimes advocated, especially with spring sowing. If the seed is properly blended it will provide all the nursing necessary for the finer grasses. My last experience with a nurse crop was planting oats on a lawn of several acres on a large estate. The owner insisted upon this being done on the theory that the oats, sprouting quickly, would provide desirable shade for the grass plants. A fine stand was secured and everything went fine until the oats had to be cut. Some scorching hot days followed a week or two later, and the tender grasses, without the shade to which they had become accustomed, were literally burned up."

## Spiked Roller Preferred

We are indebted to Mr. L. W. Childress, President of the Columbia Terminals Company, St. Louis, for the following opinion:

"It frequently happens in this section that the ground is not in condition to be raked during the early part of March, just at spring seeding time. In this connection I wish to state that for the past year or two I have used the spiked roller in preparing the lawn for seed. Through its use I have gotten very much more satisfactory results. Prior to its use I found in certain places that it was almost impossible to seed the lawn in such a manner as to prevent the seed washing away following a rainfall."

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