

# Lawn Care

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER BY  
O. M. SCOTT & SONS CO., MARYSVILLE, OHIO

Seventh Year

Number 32

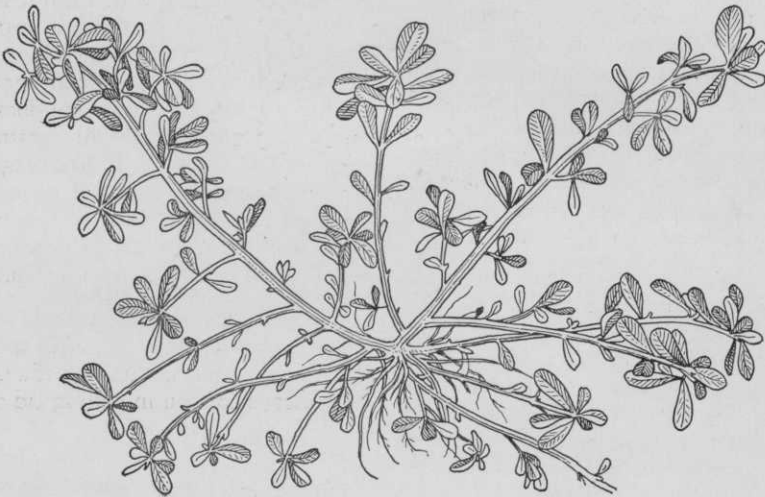
## PURSLANE

**T**HIS lawn weed is so much of a hot weather pest that it seldom bothers lawns that are given an early start. Yet, when new lawns have the disadvantage of being planted in late spring, Purslane is frequently responsible for their complete failure.

This weed is especially fond of old, abandoned vegetable gardens, and poorly cultivated fields. Topsoil sold

sunlight, which bring about their sprouting.

Its succulent, rapid growing nature makes Purslane an excellent hog food. These animals relish it probably because its fleshy stems and leaves are juicy and plump. In earlier times Purslane was used as a pot herb and is edible enough to be employed as an ingredient in a salad for table use.



PURSLANE, *Portulaca oleracea*

from neglected farms is quite apt to contain an overabundance of Purslane seed. The soil used in the construction of new lawns is often contaminated with its seed. Tests have shown that Purslane seeds remain viable in the soil for many years before being scratched to the surface in reach of moisture and

Purslane, otherwise known as Pussley, Wild Portulaca, also Pigweed and Duckweed, is an annual reproducing by self-seeding. While its foliage and roots do not live over winter, during the growing season its thick, fleshy stems will take root again, even though the plants may be uprooted by cultivation.

It is a prolific seeder until the first heavy frost completely kills the entire plant.

When new lawns are built it often happens that weed seeds of various kinds are deeply buried in the soil, especially if the topsoil is covered up in excavating and subsoil thrown on top. In later years the lawn may be re-made and when the ground is turned over such weed seeds as Purslane, still possessing the spark of life, are brought near the surface and during a period of hot weather they germinate.

### How to Identify

Without the use of color our illustration does not make the weed as readily recognizable as if the reddish stem and yellow flowers were reproduced. The fleshy stem, which is often more pinkish than red, is smooth and contains a juicy sap. The weed has a central root from which the stems branch out freely resulting in a matted growth. The leaves are wedge shaped and cluster at the ends of the branches. Small, solitary, yellow flowers which open only on sunny mornings are at the center of each leaf cluster.

The fruit or seed capsule is urn-shaped and opens transversely with the top falling off like a lid. When near maturity the plant can hardly be touched without sowing the ripened seeds by the hundreds. Purslane is most tenacious of life, often re-establishing itself after being badly battered and partially destroyed. The fleshy stems and leaves sustain the life of the plant while it is becoming re-established in the soil. It is for that reason extreme care must be exercised in disposing of the plants after they are taken from the lawn.

### Means of Control

A general statement is given by most authorities on this subject which is simply this: Hand pull or hoe out the plants before they reach the stage of maturity. When the seed cones have formed the damage will already have been done. One authority believes that Iron Sulfate will kill Purslane, but most observers believe it best to rely upon removing the plant from the soil.

To present a further means of control we quote as follows from H. B. Musser of the Department of Agronomy at the Pennsylvania State College:

"I have found a very effective method of keeping Purslane under control in new seedings is to rake it up thoroughly before each clipping with a short, sharp tooth rake. I use a rake the teeth of which are just about one inch long and one inch apart. This is sufficient to catch the stems of Purslane but does not tear up the grass. While this treatment will not kill the weed, it discourages it to such an extent that it will not crowd out the grass. I know of no other treatment for its control except hand pulling. Of course the first frost will kill it."

We shall be interested in knowing to what extent Purslane has been discovered in your lawn and how, if at all, you have been successful in getting rid of it.

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*"In general those weeds are most numerous which rise from seeds; and those most difficult to be extirpated which come from roots."*—THOMAS HALE, *The Compleat Body of Husbandry*, 1756.

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