

# Lawn Care

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## HONEYCOMBED SOIL

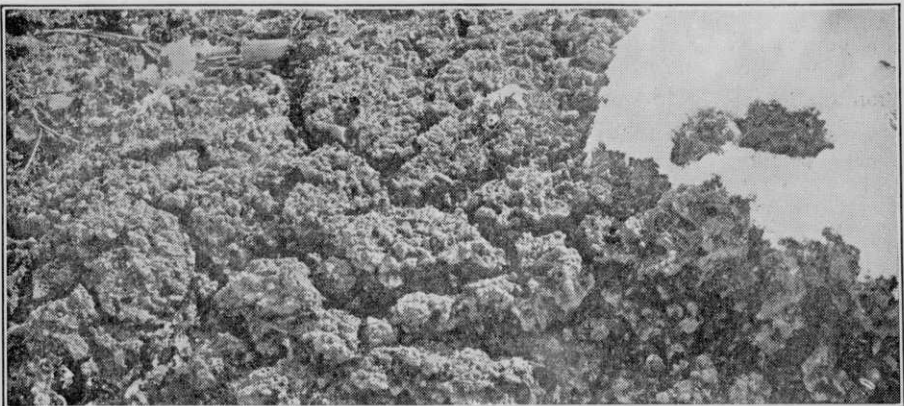
**H**EAVED or honeycombed soil is the result of the ground freezing and thawing—then freezing again. When the soil moisture freezes, ice crystals expand, spreading the soil particles apart. As the ice melts the soil remains heaved. Alternate freezing and thawing repeats the process until the surface of the ground is puffed up and porous, a condition commonly known as honeycombed soil.

The illustration which we reproduce through courtesy of the Department of Agronomy at the Ohio Experiment Station is a close-up view of soil after it has been through a hard freeze. This particular soil contains a considerable amount of organic matter and that fact accounts for the very pronounced honeycombed effect. Heavy clay soil does not "check" so deeply. Freezing very often gives it more of a glazed effect. There are many stages in honeycombing between these two extremes.

Honeycombed soil is a condition found at no other time of year than early spring. While heaving may be injurious to grass under certain conditions, the home owner is urged to take advantage of it to sow lawn seed. It pays to have the grass seed and fertilizer in the ground early, ready to go to work as soon as the soil warms up. The earlier a seed-off the grass is given, the better the results.

### Ideal Seedbed

It is obvious that honeycombed soil affords an ideal situation for seeding. The individual seeds have a place to lodge and through the period of subsequent thawing and freezing they work into the ground where they germinate when the earth becomes sufficiently warm. Early seeding in the spring has always been advocated largely for this reason. Another important thing is that when sowing this early the ground does not dry out even at the surface until



the seeds have a chance to germinate and establish themselves.

It is also important to feed lawns early. The grass food may be distributed on a light snow or frozen ground. As the snow melts and the ground thaws, nourishment will penetrate the root zone so that the grass will have a handy food supply for the first growing weather.

An early beginning is particularly important in the case of grass shaded by trees. It is necessary that the grass seed sprout before the leaves appear on the trees to compete with the young grass for sunshine. An early start for grass is the best offensive against fast-growing weeds. Bear in mind that the more desirable grasses (the kind you want in your lawn) require a longer time to germinate. It is important to give them an early send-off by sowing seed on honeycombed ground. These grasses grow slowly but under the right conditions make permanent turf.

### Topdressing

There is a definite advantage in topdressing a lawn in a honeycombed condition. Fresh soil actually penetrates the old soil, blending into it without need of raking or fuss. Distributing new topsoil on a honeycombed lawn avoids the formation of separate strata or layers, apt to be the injurious result of topdressing at any other time. Subsequent freezing and thawing works the new material, along with seed and fertilizer, into the root zone. In addition topdressing with fresh soil or compost equalizes high and low spots in a lawn better than rolling.

### Rolling

The usual honeycombed soil condition is the chief reason for rolling a lawn in the spring. The practice of roll-

ing was never intended to iron out high and low spots. Heavy use of a roller for this purpose is likely to compact the root zone and puddle the soil. The lawn roller, when properly used, is intended to press the grass roots back into the moist ground before they dry out. The roots having been heaved partially out of the ground by frost action, take hold earlier in the spring when rolled gently back into place.

Rolling in the early spring is not effective if the ground is frozen hard. Neither should it be done while the soil is so wet that it is soupy. Choose a time when the surface has dried out slightly and use a light weight roller which won't pack the soil.

The rolling should be done some time after topdressing. Fresh soil is thereby pressed firmly around the grass roots where it will do the most good.

## Heal-All Succumbs After Iron Sulphate Applied

"I would like to report my success on a piece of lawn that was infested with Heal-All to the extent that there was little, and in places, almost no grass. We sprayed it three times with a solution of iron sulphate last year, then last fall gave it a hearty meal of your Turf Builder and we have a very good stand of grass there this spring. As soon as the snow went off that piece of lawn looked green, while the rest of the lawn was more or less brown. I plan to treat the entire lawn wherever there is any trace of Heal-All this summer, then next fall give it Turf Builder.

"I find the iron sulphate kills some of the coarser grasses but there are some others it does not bother."—Mrs. J. H. Reno, Macomb, Ill.

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