

Lawn Care

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WAKE UP YOUR LAWN!

GREATEST single handicap in an early spring lawn problem is that the start isn't early enough. It is human nature to wait for the *urge*, regardless of whether one does the work himself, has a regular gardener or an "irregular" handyman. That *urge*, of course, coincides with balmy spring breezes and has no special bearing upon when the job *should* be done. To do the thing right at the right time insures getting the best response from your lawn. February is the month when Lincoln and Washington dominate our thinking. We've always given the month to them. The home owner has the golden opportunity to give it new significance by putting feeding, seeding, raking, rolling and weeding in the same category with rail splitting and tree cutting.

Feeding. After such a winter as this, the first call of grass is for a good square meal. This can be served most any time now, even scattered over the snow. It's a good idea to make the

application in February or March while the grass is still brown and dormant. No watering in or raking in is then needed and there is no danger of burning.

It doesn't take a master chef to concoct a substantial grass breakfast. Turf Builder is already prepared and will give the grass plants all the sustenance needed, applied at 10 pounds per 1000 square feet.

Seeding. Another important phase of the spring work that can be completed while it's still cold is the seeding. This as well as feeding can be gotten out of the way before the rush of spring work.

Grass seed is not injured by freezing no matter how low the temperature goes. For that reason it is safe to sow before frost has left

the ground. Then as alternate freezing and thawing of the surface occurs the seeds find their way into cracks and crevices of the soil. This provides covering for the seed so it gets necessary moisture for germination when the



later spring sun warms the soil and showers or sprinkling keep it moist.

Many early sowers prefer to plant on one of the last, thin snows. The white surface makes the seed more visible, aiding even distribution. Thus uniform growth can be expected. As the snow melts, the seed is carried into the ground to the ideal depth for good germination. Such planting should not be attempted on steep slopes where melting snow may wash away the seed.

Cleaning. The winter's accumulation of leaves, twigs and other debris should be swept or raked off the lawn as soon as the surface thaws and is dry enough to walk on. It was formerly thought that this raking needed to be severe particularly where crabgrass had been bad the previous year. Now such drastic rakings are not advised unless the seeding is delayed until well into the spring when the surface should be roughened to provide a lodging place for the seed.

Rolling. Spring is the only time necessary to roll established lawns. Rolling has but one object: to press grass roots gently back into the soil from which frost has raised them. If seed has been sown previously it also helps press it into the soil.

It is imperative to choose the right soil condition, otherwise rolling will do more harm than good. The ground should be entirely free of frost, but not sticky. The surface may be only partially dry—damp but not wet. Lawns on sandy soil can be rolled without injury while the ground is wet, but most other soils, particularly clay, will be badly compacted. When dry they become hard as rock, halting the development of the grass roots.

Regardless of the soil, a heavy roller is injurious to the turf. A water ballast roller, either empty or not over one-third full, is sufficiently heavy. Trying to iron out the high spots with a heavy roller is especially damaging. Any low

areas in the surface should be filled with topdressing.

Mowing. The date of the first mowing depends altogether on the arrival of growing weather. It is a good idea to start mowing as soon as the grass gets much of a start. If the growth is so long and lush as to topple over there may be some smothering.

Deferred Program. While early feeding and seeding pay dividends in healthy lawns, seeding later in the spring does not necessarily doom a lawn to failure. It is much better to plant seed on a thin area or bare spot even in midsummer than to leave it wide open for the invasion of troublesome weeds. Late spring and early summer plantings do make successful lawns, but they require more weeding and careful watering. The disadvantage of unfavorable weather can be offset with intelligent care.



Weed Chemical Looks Promising

A wave of publicity is now breaking on the weed control possibilities of a substance called 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid. Yes, that's the name. Don't ask us how to pronounce it—or even to spell it quickly.

Probably some better, at least funnier designations will be given before the year is out but what with the shortage of paper, typesetters and proof-readers we are simply going to call it 2,4-D for the time being.

As usual much of the popular material published is premature and way ahead of the responsible scientists who have done the real work in research on the problem. In fact one publication actually came out with a strong endorsement of a commercial product. But the lawn-owner will do well to note that the article deals mainly with control of farm weeds and not the selective control of lawn weeds under turf conditions.

Regular readers of *LAWN CARE* may recall that in the issue of September 1940, No. 62, the subject of plant hormones and vitamins was discussed. It was pointed out that Zimmerman and Hitchcock of Boyce Thompson Institute had made valuable discoveries concerning the growth-regulating properties of certain hormone substances on some plants. These acted to hasten rooting of cuttings, to increase the set of fruit and prevent premature dropping and to cause development of seedless tomatoes. More recently the same two scientists have patented a hormone substance that will retard bud development, thereby delaying their unfolding until danger of frost is past.

Some of these same substances that promote desirable plant growth may go beyond that point if used in greater concentrations. That their effect may go even further so as to prove toxic to plants has been suggested by plant scientists. Actual field trials along that line were begun early in 1944 at Beltsville, Maryland, by the U.S.D.A. and the Green Section of the U. S. Golf Association and at the New York State Experiment Station, Geneva.

Plants vary widely in their sensitivity to growth-substances. Some weeds and clovers appear more sensitive than grasses so there is hope that a weed-clover control program in lawns may be worked out with applications of 2,4-D. Indeed, preliminary tests of last summer showed good control of such

weeds as dandelion, buckhorn, lawn pennywort, heal-all and chickweed. Concentrations that are toxic to such weeds do not appear to harm lawn grasses other than the bents but they do seem to kill clover. As is to be expected, crabgrass, wild onion, Bermuda grasses and muhlenbergia are not affected.

It is to be hoped that these preliminary results will carry through in more extensive trials and that soon there may be some easier and less back-breaking methods of ridding a lawn of weeds. There are still questions and problems which the magazine and newspaper articles will probably not touch upon but which will have to be answered before we can be too sanguine about efficient weed control with 2,4-D or other hormone substances. For example:

1. Will application in spring and early summer produce results comparable to those of late summer and fall 1944?
2. Is there a harmful effect on the soil? What about amounts taken up by shrubs and trees through their roots or foliage? Will treatments have any effect on the germination of seeds?
3. Will grass be resistant to injury no matter what season of application, whether it's a dry or wet summer, moderately warm or hot, or lush growth or slow?
4. Will those who like clover in their lawns have to give it up if they want to use 2,4-D in weed control? Probably not because it will be re-established from seeds in the soil.

If this stuff really works it will be a wonderful help in the goal of better turf on lawns, golf courses, parks and even farm pastures and meadows. Probably many *LAWN CARE* readers will be trying it this summer. From those we would welcome a report of their experience.

INDEX FOR 1944 BULLETINS

Because of the shortage of paper, the usual cumulative LAWN CARE Index is not published at this time. Readers are asked to retain the index sent last year and to use it in conjunction with the index published here which covers 1944 bulletins only. Copies of the cumulative index for all issues before 1944 are still available and will be supplied free.

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SIRS:

Your recent article in "Lawn Care" about the Golden Digger Wasps was very interesting to me, and I can suggest another method of control which, though perhaps not as scientific as your suggestion, is a lot more fun.

Several years ago when no one seemed to know what they were, I discovered these wasps and their burrows with a pile of dirt about every two or three feet up both sides of my driveway, which is about 200 feet long. After trying several methods to get rid of them, none of which was successful, I decided that I would try shooting them. I obtained some shot (not bullets) for my old .22 rifle and proceeded to go hunting one Sunday morning. Between my brother-in-law and myself we shot 85 of them that morning. The following year there were many fewer burrows and I used the same procedure, until last year there was just one burrow. I have noticed two or three this summer, but have not had the patience to wait for them to fly in with their locusts. Maybe next summer the hunting will be better.

Perhaps some of your readers would like to try this method.

E. S. HAFSTATTER

Nyack, N. Y.

Past Issues of Lawn Care

This LAWN CARE issue No. 83 marks the beginning of the 18th consecutive year of publication. During that time many important lawn problems have been discussed. A partial list of the separate issues that are available for the asking follows:

WEED IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL

Chickweed	Henbit	Quackgrass
Crabgrass	Knotweed	Sedge
Creeping Buttercup	Mallow	Sheep Sorrel
Dandelions	Moneywort	Speedwell
Devil's Paint Brush	Nimble Will	Spurge
Foxtail	Pennywort	Trefoil
Goosegrass	Peppergrass	Wild Onion
Ground Ivy	Poison Ivy	Yarrow
Heal-All	Purslane	

INSECT PESTS, TURF DISEASES

Ants	Diseases	Moles
Brown Spots	Earthworms	Moss
Chinch Bugs	Grub Control	Web Worms

GENERAL MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS

Clover	Soil and Organic Matter
Dog Repellants	Spring Maintenance
Fall Maintenance	Summer Problems
Fertilizing	Terraces
Ground Covers	Tree Feeding
Liming Soils	Watering Lawns
Proper Mowing	Winter Damage
Shade Problems	

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