

Lawn Care

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ABNORMAL LAWN YEAR



THE WEATHER of the past few months can be definitely described as unusual, at least considering its effect on lawns. Over a large portion of the northern half of the country snow fell before the

ground was frozen and it stayed on so there was little frost penetration. The snow provided good lawn protection except in wet places where some snow mold developed.

As the snow melted, green grass appeared and with the warm weather of March it got under way to an early and lush growth. This soft green turf presented a problem to those who follow the LAWN CARE advice to feed and seed while the ground is frozen and the grass brown and dormant.

Since there really wasn't such a time this past season, many folks were confused as to the best plan to follow in applying Turf Builder. There was so much moisture in the ground that the grass stayed wet so the optimum condition for feeding and seeding seldom existed. Even so there were exceptions and those who were able to take advantage of the few good days, have better lawns because of having applied seed and Turf Builder.

The month of March was generally beautiful and many had to get out and

mow their lawns a month earlier than usual. But along came a cold April and May with heavy frosts. As a result lawns were set back badly, many spots turning yellow and even brown because of the freezes. The wet and cold late spring was really hard on grass that started off with such a hearty growth in the early season.

By June, warm weather began to restore the earlier damage. While it was good weather for grass with plenty of moisture, weeds were thriving, too. It is one of the laws of nature that different seasonal conditions may produce an abundance of strange weeds. A wet spring like this one may coax hard-coated seeds into sprouting and growth after many years of dormancy.

SUMMER SUGGESTIONS

Another phenomenon has been the tendency of some grasses to grow coarse and rank, quite in contrast to their usual character. This coarseness is usually temporary but while it exists those plants are hard to cut. Hand sickling may be necessary until the grass reverts to its usual texture.



A wet spring and saturated soil usually means shallow grass roots. Therefore when it does begin to get dry, prompt watering is called for if facilities

are available. If the surface soil dries rapidly and unduly, the grass is bound to suffer.

If an otherwise good lawn appears off in color and slow in growth, it may call for a feeding. Mid-summer applications of Turf Builder have to be made carefully but they can be worthwhile in stimulating a luxuriant growth through the summer when a nice lawn is most enjoyed.

The precautions for a June-July feeding are:

(1) Apply at half rate (5 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft.) when the grass is dry, and

(2) Brush the Turf Builder off the grass, using the back of a rake or push broom. On small areas it may be advisable to wash it in with the hose but if this is done be sure it is thorough. A light rain or sprinkling after application will actually increase the danger of burn.

Watch Crabgrass. A good lawn is not suddenly overrun with Crabgrass even though it may appear to be. What happens is that a few inconspicuous plants are permitted to go to seed for one or two years. These seeds are then scattered over a wide area so the next year a real invasion is evident. Just a bit of alertness can save a lot of Crabgrass trouble. As the Crabgrass seedlings are getting started and before the jointed runners take root, it is easy to pluck them out. Pulling out one plant at this stage removes thousands of potential

seeds that otherwise would mature and fall to the ground after the first frost.

Yellow Trefoil. One of the weeds that seems to become more common every year closely resembles Clover except it has yellow blossoms instead of white. It is called Yellow Trefoil (*Medicago lupulina*) and is a member of the clover family. Its growth is prostrate and so escapes mowing. Since it grows from a main central root, it is rather easily pulled when the ground is soft. The several branches should be gathered up in the hand before pulling so a firm grasp is obtained and the root extracted without breaking.

Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis stricta*). Another summer weed with a yellow flower is called Wood Sorrel or sometimes Sour Grass. It is not a grass but an upright growing little tree-like plant that bursts into bloom at the height of a couple of inches. The plant is branching at the base, pale green and slender. The leaves are alternate, palmately, three-parted, about one-half inch long, bright green and smooth. They are very sensitive and droop against the stock at night or when the plant is plucked.

Wood Sorrel is either perennial or annual but it spreads largely from seeds. Mowing prevents seeding but sometimes the plants escape cutting and grow to maturity unless hand plucked.

There is encouraging evidence that within a short time a chemical control for weeds will be available that will destroy growths of both Yellow Trefoil and Wood Sorrel without lawn injury.



WOOD SORREL



YELLOW TREFOIL

LATE SUMMER PROGRAM

Through the efforts of *LAWN CARE*, the fact that the fall season is an excellent time to sow grass seed has been pretty well accepted. The remaining task is to convince folks that the fall program should actually be carried out in late summer rather than to wait for the football season.

It is best to follow Nature's example. Her method is to mature the seeds of most perennials by mid-summer. They are then in the ground ready to sprout as the days get shorter in late August and as the heavier dews and more frequent rains provide needed moisture.

Most lawns have had to get along these last few years on a much reduced diet. Fortunately the situation on Turf Builder has changed. Now there is enough to give every lawn a good fall feeding. Turf Builder is applied at 10 pounds per 1000 square feet as part of the late summer program. It is safe to sow seed immediately afterwards.

The period from mid-August through September is ideal for lawn feeding and seeding, whether the problem is to build a brand new lawn, renovate a poor one or to keep a good lawn in top condition. Even though the weather is hot, it is all right to go ahead. If the grass is brown and dormant for want of rain, Turf Builder can be applied and seed planted so that when the rains come the ingredients will be in the soil to make a beautiful fall and winter lawn.

SIRS:

A good way to move a lawn sprinkler without walking on the soft soaked sod is to take an ordinary sprinkler and fasten a tin "toboggan" to it securely. Also put a brick on the "toboggan" under the sprinkler so the completed toboggan isn't top-heavy. By starting at the far corners of the lawn you can pull the sprinkler around with the hose without ever going near it or turning it off.

E. P. SYLVESTER

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Weed Control

IN *LAWN CARE* No. 83, published early this year, reference was made to a promising selective weed-control chemical. Extensive tests have been carried on through the summer with results so good as to be almost spectacular. It looks like the beginning of the end for dandelion and similar weeds.

There is still much to be learned about these chemicals. It is necessary to know that there is no delayed harmful effect on the grass plants or on the soil. There are also questions of timing, of effect on seed germination, of possible damage to trees and shrubs in the vicinity of the weed treatment.

It appears that most of the problems may be pretty well worked out soon and that there will be a safe and useable preparation for selective control of lawn weeds during the coming year.

Correction

We are grateful to L. S. Poor, of the Missouri Inspection Bureau, for pointing out errors of fact in No. 84 *LAWN CARE* on the control of Ants.

Gasoline fumes are heavier than air instead of lighter as stated. It is because the fumes seek lower levels that the fire hazard in careless use of gasoline is so great. Calcium Cyanide forms a lighter than air gas but Carbon Bisulphide vapor is heavier than air as stated in the article.

The Missouri Inspection Bureau is alert to the importance of educating the public to the hazards of careless use and storage of gasoline and other potentially dangerous chemicals.

SIRS:

My method of getting rid of Ants was to use a penny bean blower fitted with a stick. Pushed it eight or ten inches down into an ant hill. Withdrew the stick and poured an ounce of turpentine into the bean blower. Pulled it out. Next day there were no ants in sight.

St. Paul, Minn.

JOHN M. PETEK

LAWN CARE FOR VETERANS

Several LAWN CARE readers have kindly sent in names of returned servicemen who are embarking upon a career as landscape contractors and nurserymen.

If you know of any veteran who will qualify for this service, we will be glad to send the complete LAWN CARE in the loose leaf binder and place his name on the subscription list, without charge or obligation.

About Spreaders

Before the war many Scott lawn enthusiasts had obtained mechanical spreaders from us for applying Scotts Seed and Turf Builder. Their production was an early war casualty so that many others have had to get along without the help of a spreader.

Fortunately it is only a matter of time now until we will again be producing an improved version of the No. 50 Scott Spreader. If materials are released soon enough we will have them in time for use this fall.

Finis to Grub Worms

Entomologists in the U. S. Department of Agriculture have worked diligently for many years to find effective means of retarding the spread of the Japanese beetle. They found that arsenate of lead placed in the soil in sufficient quantities would poison the larvae of the beetles, but at best it was effective for only a limited time.

In their search these scientists discovered that it is possible to inoculate

soils with spores of a disease that is fatal to young grubs. The U. S. D. A. has developed means of producing the spores biologically in laboratories, so that eventually the materials will be available to inoculate all lawn soils.

Limited supplies are now available to the general public, so that home owners can safely inoculate their soils against future damage to their lawns by later generations of grubs. Disease development is somewhat slow and well developed grubs already in the soil may not succumb, but succeeding generations will be much reduced.

Apparently the disease spores remain alive in storage or in the soil for years on end. The disease is specific in its action against several types of grubs, but harmless to man or animals.

As a service to lawn enthusiasts we are experimenting on different methods of preparing the disease spores to furnish them in forms that are easily applied. It is anticipated that a satisfactory product will be available soon.

Lawn Care Binder



This durable loose-leaf ring binder, containing all issues of LAWN CARE and with capacity for five more years, will be sent for \$1.00 postage paid. Hundreds of

LAWN CARE readers have presented them to friends as gifts and to public libraries and garden clubs.

The same complete set of bulletins in stiff paper binding is 25c.

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