

Lawn Care

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PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES YEARLY FOR LAWNTHUSIASTS

CURTAIN GOING UP

EARLY seeders and feeders may not *get the worm*, but usually they have the best lawns. For some people, it is rushing the season to do lawn work in an overcoat, winter slacks and galoshes. Regardless of temperature, that is when the spring lawn program should begin. Many people will not start then. But LAWN CARE readers are different—they prefer to do things the right way, prevailing custom notwithstanding.

As lawns become more and more a vital part of the home scene, proper maintenance technique pays greater dividends. The lawn has now come of age—it belongs. Its cash value in the event of property sale is definite. At one time cutting grass was almost the sole consideration of the lawn owner. Now further attention pays off in additional beauty and enhancement of property value.

The extensive country-wide Scott soil testing service of last year indicated

that more lawns need lime than had been suspected. Unless generous liming was done within the past year or two, most samples east of the Alleghenies either tested low in the pH scale or showed a deficiency of calcium and magnesium. Either condition is remedied by the use of lime.

Except in natural limestone country, in western areas of low rainfall, or sections where the irrigation water is high in lime, it is a good idea to give consideration to the liming of a lawn every two or three years.

Lime deficiencies are responsible for many lawn failures blamed on other causes. For example, residents of the Piedmont Plains of Virginia and the Carolinas have assumed their climate unfavorable to the development of good lawns like those enjoyed farther north.

Now it is known that the use of lime will help turf development in that section in the same way it has aided farm-



ers—making it possible to enjoy outstanding lawns through more months of the year than in many other parts of the country.

Sometimes grass does not respond to feeding or even watering because of lime deficiency. Weed control applications may not work if the soil is extremely acid. Insect and disease injury is more severe in acid soils because grass root systems are usually shallow.

The form of lime used does not make much difference. If there is a choice, select the ordinary finely ground agricultural limestone—raw, that is—not slaked or hydrated. The latter is all right for turf except in hot weather and provided a third less is applied.

It is best to learn from soil analysis whether or not lime is required. In the absence of such information, and unless lime has been added within the year, it will do no harm to apply agricultural lime at 25 to 50 pounds per thousand square feet. Large lawns may be test-treated in smaller areas and results observed during the season. This will serve to determine whether or not the whole lawn should be limed.

Feed, Feed and Feed. Lime is not all. The old adage, "Lime and lime without manure makes farmers poorer and poorer," applies to the lawn. Only in modern practice specific lawn food replaces manure in the lawn program.

Grass responds to early feeding. Breakfast in bed is good for the lawn. Feeding can be accomplished almost any time, even on top of a light snow. Put the food there while grass is still dormant. The reward will come later, for the right kind of food will not readily leach from the soil.

If the lawn is badly infested with actively growing broad-leaved or vining weeds, you may want to use the combination material that destroys weeds and feeds the grass simultane-



ously. This treatment may well wait until the weather gets warm.

Seeding. It is safe to sow grass seed in winter. Freezing will not harm it, but instead opens up tiny cracks in the soil in which the seed will lodge. Germination takes place later on as Mother Nature warms the soil.

Raking. It makes little difference whether raking is before or after liming, feeding and seeding. The winter accumulation of leaves, dead grass and other debris is best removed before grass growth gets underway. Otherwise some grass may be smothered as it tries to revive. Of course some discretion is necessary, for one should not rake or sweep the lawn when the sod is wet and soggy and tracks badly.

Fix-up Tools. Late winter is a good time to check on the supply and condition of the lawn tools. A heavy garden rake is handy in lawn work, also a steel or bamboo broom rake. A good spreader for seeding, fertilizing and weed control is a great time saver. It should be kept clean and well oiled.

In buying a new spreader look for these important features: (1) finger tip control of rate and open-shut near

the top of the handle, (2) positive shut-off, (3) precision adjustment and guaranteed flow at light rates such as two pounds of grass seed per thousand square feet. This is particularly important when seed prices are high.

It is debatable whether a roller has any place in lawn maintenance, although the water ballast type is helpful in new lawn preparation. Established lawns on heavier soil may actually be harmed by rolling since this tends to compact. If used at all, the roller should only press heaved roots back into the soil. If it is heavy enough to actually compress the ground, then it may do harm. In many localities rollers can be rented by the day.

"Probably I would have built up a strong resistance to it, if I had been exposed to LAWN CARE about the time I was having mumps, measles and whooping cough. But to be attacked in my 70th year, I find it tough. May I continue to receive your bulletins as I read them thoroughly and find them most interesting. Hope I'm not too old to learn."

With such an open mind, we'll wager Mr. Chaney is a lawn expert in his own right.

Special Purpose Blend Replaces Dense Shade

LAWN CARE readers who are users of Scotts Seed will find a newcomer this year. Instead of Scotts for Dense Shade, a Special Purpose blend is now offered. This has been formulated to take care of dense shade, areas of poor, dry soil, as well as backyards and play lawns that may receive unusually hard wear.

This special combination is at home in full sun, but where growing conditions are reasonably good, we recommend Scotts Lawn Seed as producing the more attractive turf. When both are used on the same lawn, they should be overlapped where they meet.

Short Seed Crops Send Prices Higher

IN LAWN CARE No. 98, the reader was taken behind the scenes and told about the sources of grass seed. He learned how seed was grown, and that it is harvested in various limited areas. Principal seed producing zones in the United States include Kentucky and Illinois, the Great Plains States and the Pacific Northwest, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The British Isles and Continent, important sources for this country prior to 1939, are gradually getting back into the market.

It is peculiar that while grass is universal, most varieties set seed in commercial quantities in only limited areas. The world production of one of the most important grasses is actually confined to a few countries.

While most seed reaches the market after rough refining in the production areas, small amounts find their way to special seed cleaning mills where harmful weeds and most chaff are removed.

Not much grass seed is produced as a cultivated crop. There is little chance to further Nature's efforts by soil preparation, cultivation or other techniques. The crop is volunteer and yields depend on weather conditions in the fall, winter and spring preceding harvest.

Last summer an excellent crop was forecast for one of the important grasses. Growers were optimistic because of new combining machinery with which they expected to harvest the crop in spite of labor shortages. Then came the deluge. A July storm spilled 3 inches of rainfall in 48 hours. The dead-ripe seed was shattered so badly that only 15 percent of the crop could be saved. The market price tripled, yet the grower received a poor acreage return.

In another section drouth hit just at the critical time. A plague of grasshoppers and fungus disease cut Pacific Northwest harvests.

Some of the cheaper and coarse varieties such as Annual Ryegrass turned out fairly well. They will be used in large quantities to help reduce the price of certain lawn seed. Such mixtures make a wonderful early showing but they simply cannot produce a permanent lawn.

Good Quality is Economy

In spite of all the things that happened to grass seed harvests last year, the consumer will still get greater value if he selects the highest quality. At best, one seed produces one seedling. A pound of the smaller seeds like Kentucky Bluegrass (which has been Scott cleaned to remove chaff and weed seeds) will contain over 2,000,000 potential grass plants. The Bentgrass count is over eight million per pound, while coarse, cheap annual grasses total less than 250,000.

Since a carpet of live grass plants is the goal of every seeding, it will take ten pounds or more of the coarse varieties to grow the number of plants expected from three or four pounds of the smaller seeds. But in spite of the heavier seeding, the kind of grass one wants is not forthcoming.

Simple arithmetic demonstrates the economy of good seed. You sow less of it. Then there are the plus features of sowing clean seed instead of weeds, wasteful chaff and plain dirt.

Issue 103, 22nd Year

Many changes in lawn maintenance have evolved since the first issue of *LAWN CARE* in August, 1928. In order to keep pace with things new, earlier issues have been revised and condensed into digest form of twelve chapters:

1. PLANNING THE LAWN.
2. LAWN SOILS.
3. ROUGH GRADING AND DRAINAGE.
4. FINAL GRADING AND SEEDING.
5. PROPER LAWN MOWING.
6. WATERING LAWNS.
7. PROPER FEEDING, RESEEDING.
8. CHEMICAL WEED CONTROLS.
9. GRASS-TYPE LAWN WEEDS
10. SUMMER LAWN INJURY.
11. CONTROL, GRUBS, MOLES, ANTS.
12. LAWN RENOVATION.

In addition articles of lasting interest in recent separate issues include:

- No. 93. SOLVING SHADE PROBLEM.
- No. 94. WEED-FEED SIMULTANEOUSLY.
- No. 97. HUMUS FERTILIZER RACKET.
- No. 98. ORIGIN OF LAWN SEED.
- No. 101. WHERE WEEDS COME FROM.

Full Sets Available

All digest chapters and the more important recent issues are available in convenient permanent form. The complete set in a sturdy loose-leaf ring binder, with room for many additional issues, is one dollar, post-paid. The digests and current issues in a heavy paper cover is twenty-five cents, postpaid.



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