

Lawn Care

T.M. REG

PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES YEARLY FOR LAWNTHUSIASTS

ECONOMY IN FALL SEEDING

When the right seed is selected for fall planting, a lower rate of seeding will produce equal or better turf than a much heavier rate of spring seeding.

Why? Because the cultural loss from fall planting is less. The seed lodges in warm soil which is likely to have good moisture conditions for germination. Shorter days and cool nights favor greater root development of the seedling. There is less weed competition—all in all a better chance for each seed to produce a mature plant.

Based on tests it seems obvious that with average soil conditions, a planting of 4 pounds of good seed per 1000 sq ft in the fall will produce thicker and better turf than 6 to 8 pounds in the spring. This can add up to a substantial saving on a moderately large lawn.

The fall seeding season extends later than most folks realize. While earlier seeding produces turf to be enjoyed in the fall, it is all right to proceed with lawn planting just as late as the soil can be worked whether October or November.

What is the right seed for fall planting? (1) It must be composed of perennial varieties that will not winterkill. (2) The seed should be of properly

cured and thoroughly recleaned quality, free of bulky chaff and coarse varieties.

This kind of seed can be planted sparingly. Most folks plant two or three times as much as they should. This is not only wasteful—it is harmful. The grass comes up too thick—it is as unhealthy to try growing too many grass plants on a given area as to have too many people in a stuffy room.

Folks often have the idea they should sow heavily because "the soil is poor." That is not true. Poorer soils will not support an excessive number of plants any better than a few. Liberal use of grass food before sowing will help but extra heavy seeding—never!

A good place to invest part of the saving in using less seed is in lawn food. This will help the new seedlings get off to a better start, insuring quicker coverage, more vigorous growth and a uniform stand of new grass seedlings.

How To Sow Less Seed. If it is to be hand broadcast, mix with an equal bulk of sand, screened soil, vermiculite or other inert material. Or, punch holes in the lid of a coffee can or metal lid of a glass jar. Use an 8 penny nail, driving through from the inside of the lid. Put seed in the can or jar, fasten lid securely and you have a shaker arrangement for light seeding.

Better still use a precision spreader that is capable of sowing as little as 2 pounds per 1000 sq ft evenly and accurately. The savings in seed will soon pay for the spreader.

Preparing The Ground For Seeding.

If a new lawn, ask for **LAWN CARE Digest** Chapters 1 through 4. In brief the final steps involve firming and leveling the area with alternate use of



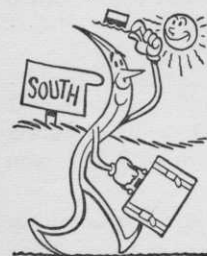
the rake and roller. Apply lawn food. Scratch surface lightly with rake to provide slightly roughened surface for seeding. Sow seed, dividing the amount in half, planting half in one line of direction, say, east and west, then the other half cross-wise to the first. This should insure more even coverage, fewer missed places. The advice applies particularly to hand sowing but it's good practice with spreader sowing too. Follow seeding with a light rolling, just enough to firm soil around the seed. If possible keep surface soil constantly moist until grass is well started.

Renovating An Old Lawn. Cut lawn closely, catching the clippings, or better still, remove by raking or with a lawn sweeper. Apply lawn food. If there are sizeable bare spots, scarify them with a flat spade or scraper so the surface half inch or so is loose to receive seed. If some spots are extra hard, as for example, trampled places, perforate with spading fork.

Sow seed, dividing in half as suggested above. Keep lawn mowed as long as grass is growing so old grass will not smother new. Keep leaves off, in particular don't let them mat down on the lawn.

Winter Lawns In The South

The northern varieties of grass like warm sunny climes in the winter months, just like many tourists. These grasses will stay green as long as temperatures don't go below 20 for protracted periods.



Native southern grasses usually turn brown after frost. Even these grasses will stay green longer if regularly fed with lawn food, including a fall application. The yellow or moth-eaten appearance of many lawns is due to lack of food more than any other cause. Water

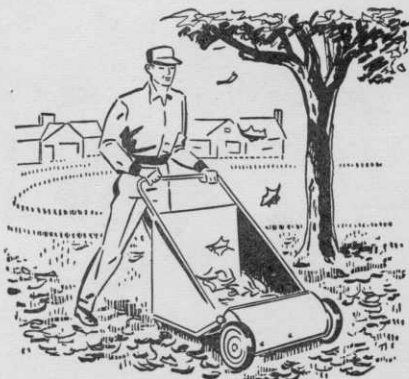
may also be needed in the earlier part of the winter.

Southern lawns can be green all winter if northern grass varieties are seeded into them. The proper procedure is to cut the lawn short, apply lawn food, sow the seed. Better results will follow if the lawn is top-dressed with screened soil before the seed is sown. The seed should then be raked or brushed into the soil with a rolling afterwards. Keeping the surface moist will hasten germination and seedling growth. It has been noted that there are many southern sections where northern grasses become more or less permanently established and will, with a little assistance, take over the lawn each winter as the southern grasses go dormant.

Winter Protection Of No Value To Lawns

It is the hot summer months that are hard on lawns, not winter. Nature has endowed perennial grasses with the stamina to hibernate in cold weather, even young plants will tolerate sub-zero conditions if there are no complicating factors such as traffic over the lawn or severe heaving of the soil.

A winter covering of straw, leaves, manure or similar materials will actually harm grass by smothering it, excluding needed oxygen from the grass roots. Particularly harmful are clumps of leaves that press down patches of grass, the whole mass freezing to the ground.



More and more folks are finding it worth while to invest in a lawn sweeper. The typical machine is an arrangement of revolving brushes mounted between two wheels. A wire-frame canvas catcher is provided into which leaves and other debris are swept by the revolving brushes.

These lawn implements are handy in other than the fall season. On a large lawn, time may be saved if the catcher is not used in mowing. Instead the clippings may be quickly picked up with the sweeper. There is less bulk to dispose of after the clippings have dried for a day.

Fertilizers Help Earthworms

U. S. Department of Agriculture Research at Beltsville, Maryland, has recently reported on further tests with earthworms. In summary they advise that earthworms thrive and do a better soil building job in well fertilized soil.

Their tests show that worms are more effective where fertilizer is used and that more benefit is obtained from fertilizer when earthworms are present.

A hint to gardeners is given in the fact that earthworms did more good, crop-wise, where the ground was covered with a winter mulch. This protected the earthworm population against sudden temperature drops. It kept the soil more moist and enabled the earthworms and fertilizer to work together for top results.

Do Not Buy Humus From Itinerant Peddlers

LAWN CARE has published stories year after year telling how home owners are mulcted of from \$100 to \$500 by smooth talking operators who promise lawn miracles with a few baskets of black magic.

They come around with a truckload of rich-looking stuff they call humus and offer to put it on at what seems a low price. At best it is worthless worn-out muck. It may be toxic or polluted

with weed seeds. Shun these sharpsters. Their tricks put the old time medicine man to shame. He got a dollar for a bit of colored water. They get hundreds of dollars for something of less value.

One victim's story:

These men called and sold me the dirt at \$1.50 a bushel. Of course my actions were exactly as described in your "Pay Dirt" article but I had not read LAWN CARE until AFTER the experience. As the men were scattering the dirt I went into the house. A neighbor called and told me I had better go out and check and see how much I owed them before they put more dirt on the lawn, as she had been greatly shocked over her debt. I did this and they claimed 250 bushels. The arguments began. I gave them two checks, one for the day of work and a post-dated one, August 2nd, on which I stopped payment but the bank paid it anyhow. Well, I have long whiskers on that type of salesmanship at least.

Don't Mix Seed and Fertilizer

Many LAWN CARE readers ask if it is all right to mix seed and fertilizer together so as to apply both in one operation. In general the answer is "No." There is a chance of harming the seed, especially if the combination is stored for any length of time.

One argument advanced is that time is saved by mixing the two materials and applying them as one spreader operation. This is rather imaginary. The separate jobs of seeding and feeding are done so quickly with a good spreader that the mixing would take as much time as saved in spreading. Besides, mixing is a dusty operation. Many would not get an even mix of seed and fertilizer and end up with spotty results.

SIRS:

I have found my Scotts Spreader ideal for spreading Calcium Chloride on my icy pavements and driveway. With the spreader set for wide open, it scatters these crystals evenly and more effectively than is possible by hand.

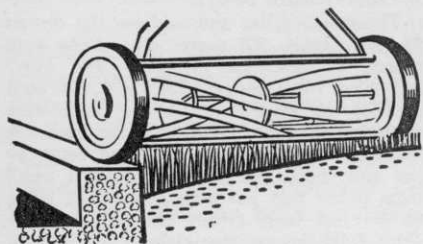
W. A. AMELUNG.

Waterbury, Conn.

Calcium Chloride is also applied for dust control. The Spreader should be thoroughly washed and dried immediately after using a corrosive material of this kind.

More On Edging

Faced with miles of edging along the curbs and walks of the Federal District Commission we are treating it this way. We roll away the sod for a couple of feet from the edge of a walk and scrape out about 2 inches of soil.



Then we relay the sod. After that it is only necessary to cut with one wheel of the mower on the walk. The grass can't spread sideways.

EDWARD I. WOOD

Ottawa, Ontario. Landscape Architect.

An excellent suggestion from one of many Canadian readers.

New Chemicals Aid Lawn Pest Control

The value of DDT in controlling various pests, such as mosquitoes, lice and flies, has been well established. New chemicals or new uses for old materials are being discovered regularly. At least one of these, Sabadilla, will be of real help in controlling certain pests that do harm to grasses.

Fortunately DDT, Sabadilla and other chemicals can be combined to make a general pesticide for control of a number of lawn pests. These materials are relatively non-toxic to humans, pets and birds when used in diluted strengths required for pest control.

Scotts have prepared an easy-to-use formulation of Pest Control for the

convenience of those whose lawns are being injured by any of the following:

Grubs of Jap Beetles harm grass by severing roots just below the surface. The grubs hatch in August and September, feed on grass roots in the fall and again in May and June.

After a severe attack, chunks of sod can be rolled up like a carpet to reveal the light, cream colored grubs, shrimp shaped, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter.

Pest Control, applied any convenient season, will keep Jap Beetle Grubs in check for several years.

The common white grub of the May beetle is more difficult to control because it usually feeds much deeper in the ground. Arsenate of Lead at 10 pounds per 1000 square feet is still the only known deterrent.

Earthworms are of many kinds and names including angleworms, dew worms, night crawlers, fishing worms. They are generally not harmful, in fact are said to be important in soil drainage and in topsoil formation.

In excessive numbers, earthworms may harm lawns in two ways. Their casts may smother grass plants, make the ground bumpy or even interfere with mowing. The larger ones are able to grasp young seedling plants and pull them into their burrows. Extensive damage may be observed occasionally in wet locations harboring large colonies.

If earthworm activities are obnoxious, there would seem no reason for not taking control measures. They won't all be eliminated but their activities considerably reduced. On the other hand if Pest Control needs to be applied for other insects, there is little reason to be concerned as to depopulating earthworms.

Skunks, Moles damage lawns in their attempt to get at grubs and worms in the soil. Eliminating this food supply removes the cause of skunk and mole activity.

Chinch Bugs, Sod Webworms, Army Worms and Cutworms are also checked with Pest Control. Applications should be made in warm weather when they are active.

Scotts Pest Control is made up simply as a convenience item in lawn maintenance. It is broadcast dry over the lawn surface, very lightly, preferably with a good spreader.