

# Lawn Care

T.M. REG  
PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES YEARLY FOR LAWNTHUSIASTS

## AND THEY STILL BITE

THE BAIT is a bit different at times. But the racket is still the same as frequently described in LAWN CARE. A truck loaded with what looks like "rich, black dirt" pulls up in front of a nice looking home. Usually two men are aboard, one of them the spokesman.

He spins a glib story that would outdo the best old time medicine men. For so much a basket they will really fix up the lawn because their stuff provides humus, fertilizer, seed, weed killer, and even vitamins. Sometimes they promise permanent dampness.

Actually all they have is worthless, tired old muck or other exhausted organic material. Surprisingly those who should know better are the ones who so often fall—doctors, lawyers, business men, besides the nice widows and maiden ladies who are supposed to be the gullible ones.

Typically the trick is to put ten baskets of the "magic" stuff on the lawn but claim to use 50 or 100. By some pretext or other, they maneuver the owner so he is not in position to count. They make their price so high they can cut 20% or more from the bill and still walk away with several hundred dollars clear profit.

A new quirk was reported recently by a Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, newspaper. A couple of husky young men offered to apply "humus" at 7 cents per bushel. The owner said okay. He thought it was cheap. When the pair had finished, they demanded 70 cents per basket, claiming the owner had misunderstood their price quotation. Because they were big and threatening, they got the money.

The papers of Keane, New Hampshire, tell of the arrest and subsequent conviction of two men who were oper-



ating this racket in their town. Previously they had mulcted several residents, including two doctors. The same operators are reported to have taken over \$500 from several professional and business men in Greenfield, Mass.

In many instances of the black dirt racket, the trucks bear out-of-state licenses. Instead of arousing suspicion, this seems to lend enchantment. The racket would be stopped if lawn owners followed the oft-repeated advice of LAWN CARE to "buy soil, humus, or lawn and nursery work and services from a local concern that can provide satisfactory local references." Know your landscape man or nurseryman. There are qualified and legitimate operators in every community.

By the time of killing frost, untreated Crabgrass plants will have dropped thousands of seed to the soil. **There is then no value in applying Crabgrass controls.** The crop has been set for the next year so the only thing to do is start a control program next summer to stop the new crop before it can damage the lawn.

## Better Keep Your Mower!

Several feature writers have excited many folks this year by optimistic reports on a chemical that is supposed to halt the growth of grass, but still keep it nice and green.

Let no lawn mower manufacturer jump out of the office window in despair. The magic of chemistry isn't that good yet. Perhaps an important place in horticulture and agriculture will be found for Maleic Hydrazide. However, Scotts Research tests last year and again this year show little promise for its use on lawns.

A rate of spray that stopped growth, did it by the death method. In repeated tests it invariably discolored and

injured the grass to the extent that it would displease any home owner.

Common sense would seem to classify this as an act against Nature. Stop growth and you stop life. When Newfoundland dogs can be held down to Pekinese size and you can throw away your razor because whiskers stop growing, maybe lawns can be so treated that the mower can be put into moth balls. For the present the advice is keep it in good state of repair.

A further claim for M-H is that Crabgrass is killed "by doses which do not seem to affect the good permanent grasses like Bluegrass, Fescue and Bent." Perhaps so under certain conditions but in a series of tests by Scotts Lawn Research all three of these varieties were killed at rates much lower than needed for Crabgrass. In fact applications below the critical range for Bluegrass actually seemed to give Crabgrass a new lease on life.



"Me and Scotts products done it," was the joking comment of C. F. Farris of Billings, Montana, after he took top honors for the most beautiful lawn in town. His success formula includes plenty of grass food and water. He cuts high, leaves the clippings but after they are dry he cross-mows to scatter them evenly over the lawn.

## Veteran Reader Reminds Us



The first issue of **LAWN CARE**, August 1928, was sent to not more than five thousand souls. At least one of these folks has a sharp memory and a valuable file of the early bulletins as witness this letter:

Sirs:

Many congratulations on the production of your new compound, **SCUTL**, for the control of Crabgrass. I have known for about twenty-four years—since I first reacted to your advertisement on lawn seed in the *National Geographic Magazine*—that you have been wrestling with this vexacious problem. In "Vol. 1" (September, 1928, No. 2), which is devoted to the "King of the Fall Pests," Crabgrass, is the following significant statement:

"The surest way to rid the ground of Crabgrass is to pull the plants by hand during June and July . . ."

Following the above directions and keeping in mind the fact that in your many **LAWN CARE** bulletins you have always advised against bare spots by keeping the turf thick, I have been more than ordinarily successful in combating this worst of lawn pests because mine is a small grass plot—and hand pulling of weeds for me has not been too arduous a task.

May I take this occasion to thank you for the many, many **LAWN CARE** bulletins sent me from the beginning. Each one has had its own particular and absorbing message and after studying and marking its significant passages, it has been filed away for future reference by one of your long-time devotees who is interested in better lawns, but who—at 68—still considers himself an attentive amateur.

THOMAS J. FLYNN  
Roslindale, Boston, Mass.

SIRS:

My neighbors and I have discovered the most perfect lawn it has been our privilege to behold, unquestionably the finest in the 48 states. Upon inquiry of the proud owner, he informed us the turf was installed ten years ago, using all Scotts products.

HENRY HOROVITZ  
Jamaica 3, N. Y.

## How Late In The Fall

For one reason or another, folks find winter weather imminent before they can get their fall lawn work done. Particularly is this true where a new home has been built and the schedule is such that the lawn can't be worked on until quite late.

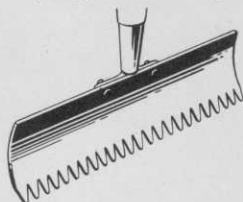
The question is put to the editors thousands of times, "Shall I seed at this late date or wait until spring?" Generally the answer is, "If you can get the ground ready, go ahead. There is better than an even chance of the seed lying dormant but uninjured through the winter, ready to sprout when the soil warms in the spring."

This bit of advice has backfired in the last couple of years because of mild weather over a large part of the country. Ordinarily the seed could be expected to be under frozen conditions which would preserve it as a deep freeze does with food products. If the winter is mild the seed is apt to rot and its germinating ability destroyed.

So the decision to seed after mid-October hinges on long range weather forecasting which may be by hunch or by the old timers' signs that supposedly portend whether or not it's to be a real old-fashioned winter.

SIRS:

I had noted in your **LAWN CARE** No. 106, suggestions of implements for loosening



the soil crust of old lawns. Instead of using any of these I took one of those curved-tooth rakes which are designed for pulling Crabgrass, straightened out the teeth considerably by tapping it with a hammer, and, in my opinion, made a more effective tool than those suggested. Used with a hacking motion it breaks up the soil of bare spots with little damage to the remaining grass.

RAY E. SNELL.  
Lincoln, Nebraska.

# Lawn Reseeding Suggestions

Most any lawn requires additional seeding from time to time. Bald spots develop because of injury or as a result of holes left by departing weeds. In the fall the voids left by retreating Crabgrass or Bermuda grass should be filled-in with good seed to restore a solid green covering.

Growing conditions are better for seedings in the early spring or early fall. If the need for seeding develops at some other time, it should be accomplished to get grass started in those places before unwanted weeds take over.

If the turf thins out, a general seeding is advisable. Otherwise spot seeding only is sufficient. Some folks use their spreaders to sow lightly several times a year so they can enjoy the fresh, bright color of seedling grass.

## METHOD

First choice for general over-all seeding is a mechanical distributor like the Scott Spreader. This saves seed and enables more even application. As a matter of fact it is probably more economical than spot seeding if much area requires it.

In hand broadcasting it's a good idea to mix the seed with an equal bulk of inert material such as sand, screened soil or even cornmeal. It is difficult for the average person to sow seed as sparingly as it should be sown unless it is somehow increased in bulk.

## EXCESSIVE SEEDING HARMFUL

Plant life is similar to human or animal in that it is unhealthy to have them living in too crowded conditions. If too much seed is sown, the soil will not supply enough moisture or nutrients to support the crowded seedlings. They will consequently be weakened and more subject to ravages of damp-

ing off and other diseases. The idea of sowing extra heavily because of poor soil is exactly wrong. The poorer the soil, the fewer plants it will support. Generous use of grass food should accompany heavy seedings.

## HELPING THE SEED

Many have difficulty in getting grass started in bare or thin areas of established lawns. Such failures are mainly due to merely scattering seed on top of the ground. There it is easy prey to birds, winds and washing, driving rainfall, or if it escapes these fates, the seedlings die for want of moisture. A little care in reseeding bare spots brings better results. Here are some suggestions:



1. Loosen and fine the soil crust by lightly chopping it with a flat garden spade, axe or spike tamp. Other good implements include the half moon turf edger or a flat walk scraper.

2. Topdress with good soil. This may follow seeding, if no more than a quarter-inch is used. If a heavier covering, seed after soil is spread and then rake seed into loose soil and firm by tamping and rolling.

In warm, dry weather try to keep surface moist until the seedlings are well rooted. This may mean quite frequent watering.

If the weather is cold or quite dry seed can lie dormant for many weeks without injury to it. Germination will take place when favorable conditions arrive.