

Lawn Care

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER BY
O. M. SCOTT & SONS CO., MARYSVILLE, OHIO

August 1928

FIRST YEAR

Number 1

DO YOU KNOW YOUR WEEDS?

Maintenance of a good lawn means a constant fight with weeds. While many of these pests must be pulled or dug out there are some which can be discouraged by other methods less laborious. Frequently *Lawn Care* will illustrate a common weed, give a brief history of it, and tell if possible how it may best be combated.

PLANTAIN

A Characteristic Lawn Weed

This common turf weed appears in many shapes and forms. There are at least six different varieties represented by such names as Bracted, Hoary, and Whorled Plantain. The more usual species are Common or Broad-leaved Plantain (*Plantago major*) and Buckhorn or Narrow-leaved Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). The latter will be discussed in a separate *Lawn Care* issue.

The common Plantain is a low growing plant which manages to escape the closest mowing by having its leaves arranged in a flat rosette. It thrives best on moist soils of low fertility in meadows, pastures and lawns. During its seeding time, July to September, it insists on sending up long seed spikes on tough stems which resist ordinary lawn mowers. The main reason for its rapid spread westward after being introduced from Europe is the ability of Plantain seeds to be-

come sticky when they are wet. In this condition they stick to shoes as well as animals' legs and are dropped when they lose this property upon drying.

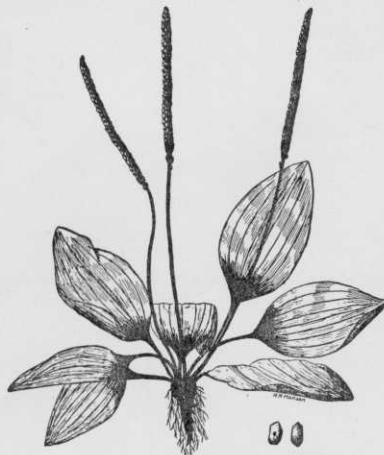
Common Plantain is a perennial which increases by seed distribution. It enjoys a very strong combination root system with many fibrous roots branching from a short but sturdy taproot. It has such a firm grip on the soil that the pest is difficult to eradicate by hand pulling and digging.

Control Measures

Any attack should take place before the weed starts to seed. Scattered plants may be destroyed by individual treatments with carbolic acid without much defacement of the turf. Squirt a few drops of carbolic acid into the crown of each plant with an ordinary machine oil can.

Of course, the separate plants may be cut out but care should be taken to remove most of the taproot.

Where Plantain are too thick to make



BROAD LEAVED PLANTAIN

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individual treatment practical and yet the area is not the proper size for cultivation, it is worth while to destroy them with iron sulfate. Dissolve 3 pounds of iron sulfate in 5 to 10 gallons of water and sprinkle or spray this solution on 1000 square feet of lawn area. Several treatments may be necessary for best results. Repeat applications should be carried out at the first signs of recovery shown by the weeds. This chemical in solution leaves an ugly rust stain on clothing, metal and stonework. Care should be taken in handling it to avoid spilling and splashing.

Badly infested lawns should be plowed under, cultivated, fertilized and replanted with clean seed. Regularly feeding an established lawn is the most practical weed control measure. A partially inorganic grass food used frequently makes possible a weedfree lawn. Usually weeds, even Plantain, invade only that turf which is not strong enough to resist their presence.

Plantain Killer

Mr. Fred Nessly, out in Seattle, sends this suggestion for putting Plantain out of business:

"I dip a sharpened hardwood stick into sulfuric acid and thrust it into the center of the Plantain. It kills the roots immediately and does not injure the grass. Several weeds may be killed before it is necessary to dip it again."

If anyone else has been particularly successful in combating Plantain, we shall be glad to learn of his methods.

Runway for Weeders

"Getting after Plantain and Dandelions will not be a back breaking job if you work it this way. Get 6 inch spike nails and two long pieces of rope

or string. Then make a loop at the ends of each piece and after pushing two spikes into the ground 1 to 2 feet apart to make a runway, commence at one end and work down so you will not miss any weeds. If you do not use a runway of this kind you are inclined to wander all around the lawn where you happen to see a weed. You can sit down to the job when you work by my method."—H. G. Barnes, 41 Franklin Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

English Lawns Not Weedless

Perhaps you have heard the old story of the American tourist who asked an English gardener how they could have such beautiful lawns as you find in England. The reply came back:

"That is easy. You simply prepare the seed bed carefully, sow clean seed, roll, weed, water, fertilize and mow—after a hundred years of such practice you have a real lawn."

Everything is doubtless correct in that statement except the hundred years; and one important thing was overlooked: you must have English climate. The amount of moisture in the air and the frequent rains help very much in the easy maintenance of lawns in England. Nevertheless the late Dr. Piper, chairman of the Green Section of the U. S. Golf Association and an eminent authority on grass growing, made a trip to England a few years ago to study turf problems. He found weeds fully as bad in the English golf courses as they are on this side and a much less comprehensive knowledge of grasses, their habits, uses, etc. It was his opinion that our English friends are depending too much on their ideal grass growing weather to carry the load.

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