

Lawn Care

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

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IRON SULPHATE—WEEDICIDE

THIS was one of the first chemicals to be used to any great extent as a weed killer in this country. It is still widely used, being the most popular material for this purpose at the present time. Besides being beneficial to the agriculturist in destroying certain of his crop weeds, it is especially effective in controlling perennial lawn pests such as Dandelion and Plantain.

It is used as a selective spray for these weeds in the lawn when their occurrence is beyond individual treatment. It has also been found effective for others such as Chickweed, Heal-all, Knawel, Sorrel and Shepherd's Purse as well as toadstools. In grain fields it kills certain mustards and other annuals.

Effectiveness

A great deal depends on the condition of the weeds and the weather following. One thing is certain; the cost per application is reasonable enough to allow a person to repeat the treatment at frequent intervals until he develops a better understanding of the technique involved.

For best results iron sulphate spray is most effective when the humidity is high. A quiet, cloudy day is ideal providing it is not followed by rain for a day or so. No sprays should be applied during the dry, hot weather of late July and the first weeks of August, as the grass will be more severely injured than when it is growing vigorously.

Iron sulphate blackens all leaves but does not kill grass blades. If the lawn is cut a few days after being sprayed, the blackened ends of grass blades will be removed.

Where to Buy It

Because iron sulphate is a by-product of industry, it may be obtained in large quantities at a very moderate cost of a few cents per pound. Almost every drug store handles it. The powdered or granulated form is more easily soluble and should be specified for the quickest solution. Its drug store name is copperas. Other names for this chemical are green vitriol, sulphate of iron and ferrous sulphate.

Since it is so easily soluble in water, it is best distributed in solution. Care must be taken not to spill or splash this solution on sidewalks, foundations, metal work, shoes or clothing as it leaves rusty stains. This ugly mark is most difficult to remove from these objects. Iron sulphate is harmless, being neither inflammable nor poisonous.

How to Apply

The method which has been found most practical for the application of iron sulphate solution is as a fine mist with a pressure sprayer. Immediately before applying the chemical the area should be dragged. For this purpose use a steel door mat or a heavy plank. This bruises the foliage so that the iron sulphate will penetrate the broad leaved

weeds to a greater degree. It is only necessary to spray the foliage, not to saturate the soil with the material.

For spraying solutions dissolve 4 to 5 pounds of iron sulphate in 5 to 10 gallons of water and distribute this uniformly over 1000 square feet of weed infested turf. A lawn of 10,000 square feet or about one-fourth of an acre would require 45 pounds of iron sulphate in about 60 or 70 gallons of water. The capacity of the equipment used depends on the size of the lawn area. Strain the more concentrated solutions through a cheese cloth to remove the undissolved particles which might clog the sprayer.

Time after time it has done the job thoroughly on Dandelion, Heal-all and Chickweed, but do not expect wonders from a single application. The above suggested rate should be repeated from 3 to 6 times per season at one or two week intervals. At the end of two weeks the Dandelions will have made new growth and it is only by continual killing of the new foliage that the vitality of the weed is sapped. Finally there is nothing left. The first spraying should be made in spring before blossom buds open. Subsequent applications should follow at close enough intervals so that the weeds will not make too vigorous a comeback. Three treatments in spring and early summer and two in late summer are usually sufficient. Late summer or early fall sprays are intended to weaken the weeds so they may be more easily winter killed. Following the last treatment, the thin turf areas should be fertilized and reseeded with a weed-free lawn seed mixture.

It may also be applied with an ordinary sprinkling can with fine spray nozzle. The operator of this latter

device walks steadily across the area swinging the can at a slow rate an arm's length at his side. This pendulum-like motion insures uniform coverage. In using the sprinkling can method at least 10 gallons of water is necessary to cover the area as the flow is at a greater rate. The finer the spray, the less volume of solution is needed as its distribution is more easily controlled.

For individual treatment a saturated solution of iron sulphate is applied at the end of a pointed stick to the crown of the weed. A saturated solution is a solution of iron sulphate and water so concentrated that some undissolved solid remains at the bottom of the liquid.

The powdered form of this chemical may be dusted on the moist foliage of lawn pests. This method has proven effective on isolated patches of Chickweed and Heal-all. A handy applicator may be fashioned out of a tin can with nail holes punched through the bottom. Use such a device as one would a salt shaker. Hold the can close to the ground to avoid spilling too much chemical onto the adjacent grass. A cooking strainer or an inexpensive flour sifter might be used in somewhat the same manner.

On Bent Grass

Iron sulphate should not be used on Bent Grass, seeded or stolons, except at much lower rates. In our opinion the Creeping Bent which is in need of a chemical weed killer has not received proper cultural practices. Rather than attempting to rid a Bent lawn of weeds by this method, it should be entirely replanted and maintained from the start as a weed-free area by correct feeding, watering, mowing, and topdressing.

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