

Lawn Care

A discussion of the vital problems of lawn making and maintenance

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The Spring Lawn Menu

YOU cannot very well mark your calendar as definitely as this—sow lawn seed Monday, March 4th or Monday, March 28th, because seasons vary. Consequently any date suggestions in these columns now or at any time are approximate.

SOWING

Ordinarily lawn seed should be sowed early in March. Experts say "the earlier the better." Weeds cause less trouble when seed is sowed early and the grass gets a good start before hot, dry weather.

ROLLING

It is important that rolling never be attempted when the soil is in a soggy condition; that is, rolling should be done when there is no excess of moisture in the soil. This is especially true in the case of heavy soils. The weight of the roller to be used and the amount of rolling required depends upon the type of soil. Light or sandy soils require and will bear more rolling and the use of heavier rollers than will heavy soils. On an average a roller should weigh from 175 to 225 pounds. The longer the roller, of course, the more it may weigh. For example, 100 pounds of weight for each foot in length of the roller is considered proper for ideal results.

FEED YOUR GRASS

Grass needs to be fed and it is a particularly good time to apply fertilizer in the spring when we are having rains which will properly distribute the different elements of plant food through the soil. On most lawns a complete fertilizer is preferable. (One containing the three elements of plant food. See enclosed folder entitled "Feed Your Grass.") Where weeds are particularly bothersome Sulphate of Ammonia is advisable. The first fertilizing, according to the best authority, should be done early in April. Even if the lawn has been rolled prior to that time another rolling after your fertilizer has been applied and raked in will be helpful. At this time it is not possible to say what damage, if any, the winter has done to grass. The chances are it has been hurt somewhat and the important thing is to get your lawn in condition as early as possible to withstand an even more trying period than winter, namely, midsummer.

—❖— MOSS

The next issue of *LAWN CARE* will describe among other things the causes and cures for Moss. We receive many requests for information on this subject. What are your views? Have you had Moss in your lawn? Did it disappear and as a result of what treatment?



Dandelion Delirium



EACH spring the first uninvited arrival in the lawn is the yellow-haired dandelion. That is our weed for discussion in this issue. There are three methods of combatting it:

1. *Hand Digging*—a sure plan but laborious on a large area. Care should be taken to kill the root by the application of a little salt or gasoline.

2. *Killing with Poison* either applied to the crown of the plant or put on with a spray. In the latter case Iron Sulphate is most commonly used. This can be obtained at almost any drug store. A solution is prepared by dissolving 2 pounds of Iron Sulphate in a gallon of water. One gallon will spray 860 square feet. The Iron Sulphate comes in granular form and dissolves easily. Similarly a common salt solution has been successfully used. Two and a half pound dissolved in a gallon of water makes the best solution. Even more deadly is Sulphuric Acid. This may be applied by using a sharp stick, dipping it into a bottle of Sulphuric Acid and then into the crown of the dandelion. Another

killing method is to apply gasoline to the plants either by means of a long oiling can or a special dandelion killer of which there is one or more on the market.

It may be well to mention the fact that if Iron Sulphate is used in killing dandelions, care should be taken not to allow it to fall upon the cement walks as it will stain them.

3. *Fertilizing*. It is known that Ammonium Sulphate which tends to create an acid condition in the soil is not liked by dandelions yet it does not discourage Blue Grass. In fact if the Ammonium Sulphate is mixed with a complete fertilizer, the grass will even be benefited. Thus you may encourage your grass and discourage dandelions and many other weeds are similarly affected. Considering that the wind will blow dandelion seed from a great distance a constant fight must be waged to keep the plant in subjection.



Winter Drouth and Its Effect on Grass

WHAT no plant can stand, winter or summer, is drying out, and that is the great winter problem of growing plants. They can resist cold but not drouth. We lose sight of the fact that very dry weather frequently occurs in winter, because we do not have the indicators of drouth familiar to summer: wilting leaves, clouds of dust and uncomfortable thirst in our own throats. But these winter drouths are very real and so severe that even objects that are frozen solid lose measurable quantities of water through evaporation.

When plants are protected by a blanket of snow, the little atmosphere that is left around them under the snowbank is nearly saturated and of course the winds are completely blocked off. The falling

of snow also means that the air has more moisture in it than it has in open winter, so the air is less thirsty and even the buds on the trees are not subjected to such violent demands for water. While a blanket of snow protects grass in other ways also its greatest service is this function of conserving the scanty winter supply of water.

In the light of these facts it appears that grass which looks hopelessly "whipped" after an open winter may simply be suffering from an inadequate water supply rather than from cold weather. There isn't much we can do about this except possibly to fertilize our lawns in the fall, get the grass in healthy, vigorous condition, and then let it grow long without mowing in the month of October.

The Simple Art of MOWING

TELLING a man how and when to mow his lawn sounds like advising him how and when to cut his hair, but the one is a matter of taste while the other is good or bad practice for the welfare of the grass. To keep a lawn looking well the grass must be cut oftener than it should be cut to keep it healthiest. In other words the constant clipping of a lawn tends to remove much of the fertility which has been stored in the grass blades. Thus you see the necessity for frequent fertilization. Through its growing process grass feeds upon the plant food and stores it up in the leaves or blades. When the catcher or rake removes the clipped blades it likewise removes a certain amount of stored up plant food which should periodically be replaced. It is therefore claimed by many authorities, including C. J. Willard of the College of Agriculture at Ohio

State University, that a lawn "should be cut often enough that the clippings can be left on the lawn instead of removed." Professor Willard has some very definite views on this subject and we quote him further: "The higher the grass is cut the better for the grass and certainly it should not be 'scalped' just before periods of little or no growth, such as come in July and August." We shall have some further comments to make about mowing, in a fall issue of *LAWN CARE*, for fall mowing practice has much to do with the ability grass has to withstand severe winters.

GIVE THE GRASS
A CHANCE

SOMEONE suggests that the above be substituted for the time honored command "Keep off the grass." Why isn't that a good suggestion? The appeal is from the heart and not the fist. We wager it would be more effective, too.

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Your leaflet *LAWN CARE* has become a firm friend after its introduction to me this morning. It contains exactly the information for which I have been searching. Thank you for putting me on your list.
Signed: H. E. BARLING.



Does It Pay to Lime Your Lawn?

LIME is one of the indirect fertilizers; that is, it favorably influences crop growth through its effect on the soil rather than through the addition of plant food. It is contained in most soils in sufficient quantity for plant growth. Though certain plants are benefited by application of lime, it exhausts or burns out the humus content of the soil by rapid nitrification.

PURDUE SAYS "No."

In experiments conducted at Purdue University some years ago it was found that no appreciable effect could be noted from the use of lime in spite of the fact that the soil was somewhat acid. The conclusion was reached that fertilizer for turf grasses should be high in available nitrogen. It was observed also that the average city water of different towns in Indiana (and they are probably no exception) contains lime and that on lawns that had been sprinkled for many years with city water, the lime content of the soil was high and the proportion of weeds increasing.

LIME ENCOURAGES WEEDS

Lime is of benefit on stiff clay soils, but the tendency it has to encourage weeds and to bring about the loss of organic matter through too rapid decomposition indicates that the possible advantages from the use of lime do not balance the disadvantages. Certain plants, particularly the legumes (Clover, Soybeans, Cowpeas) require an excess of lime in the soil for their best development. On the other hand there are many grasses which do best on acid soil, noticeably the Bents and Fescues. While Blue Grass is believed to be a lime lover it is highly probable that fine Blue Grass turf

is due to the high quality of the soil where this variety is native and not to the lime specifically. At any rate turf of very fine quality can be found on soils of no lime content.



Good Plant Food— Not Lime Needed

WHAT lawn grasses need most is an abundance of plant food, and where this is furnished they will thrive as well on acid soil as on alkaline. In the Pacific northwest grass grows admirably on acid soil, but the soils there are very rich. When lime is applied to the soil it creates a condition favorable to the growth of clover and weeds, particularly Crab Grass, Plantain and Buckhorn. For this reason in particular it is not recommended in growing turf grasses. Next month we shall have something to say about the effect of lime on moss.

Summarizing, there is little or nothing to be gained by liming lawns. Even though in some instances beneficial results may be noted from liming, it does not necessarily prove that better and more lasting results can not be obtained by a similar expenditure for nitrogenous fertilizer.



EFFICIENCY.

"I have been a customer of yours for several years and would not run the risk of wasting time and labor on anything but Scott's Seed."—C. P. SLANE, Publisher Peoria Journal-Transcript, Peoria, Illinois.

