

Lawn Care

A discussion of the vital problems of lawn making and maintenance

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Watch for Web Worms

SOD web worms did a terrific amount of damage to lawns and putting greens last fall. These small grayish worms, the caterpillars of white and yellowish brown moths, eat off grass just at the crown. Brown dead spots then appear in the turf. (See *LAWN CARE*, August, 1931, Vol. IV, No. 4, Pages 1 and 2.)

While the infestation was very severe in 1931, no one can tell whether there will be any trouble in 1932. This will depend upon weather conditions and upon the prevalence of parasites which ordinarily keep web worms in check. Our suggestion is to watch your lawn carefully during June, July and August for the appearance of small brown dead spots. If these are observed, surrounding areas should be scrutinized closely to determine if any of the worms are present. It is difficult to find the worms as they move swiftly and they are hard to see because of their dirty-grayish color.

CONTROL MEASURES.

Arsenate of Lead. Dust on infested turf at rate of 6 or 7 pounds per 1,000 square feet. A hand dusting machine or a rotating fan duster is best although arsenate can be put on by placing it in a coarse burlap sack and shaking the sack up and down with a quick jerky motion.

After the lead has been distributed it should be worked down into the ground by sweeping the lawn with a floor brush or broom. Following this it should be thoroughly washed off the grass blades by a heavy stream from a hose. A mechanical sprinkler is not satisfactory, but a heavy, coarse stream of water should be applied direct from a nozzle.

Kerosene Emulsion. The cheapest treatment is to make a kerosene emulsion but there is considerable danger incident to using it. There is a fire hazard in making it, and if improperly made it may injure turf.

The Bureau of Entomology of the United States Department of Agriculture recommends the following procedure in making a kerosene emulsion:

"Dissolve 1 pound of laundry soap in 1 gallon of boiling water; remove from fire, add ½ gallon of kerosene; stir rapidly until a creamy emulsion is obtained. This stirring may be accomplished by pumping the mixture into itself through a spray pump or by churning it in an inexpensive household butter churn. Small quantities have been prepared with an egg beater. For use as a spray, 1 part of this stock emulsion should be mixed with 50 parts of water and this mixture applied to the infested turf at the rate of about 1 gallon to a square yard (112 gallons to 1,000 square feet). Apply with a sprinkling can."

The material cost is about one-sixth of a cent per square yard.

Summer Fertilization

MANY lawns need summer feeding, especially those on rather poor soils or in shaded locations. The fact that grass turns brown as hot weather gets into full sway is, of course, not necessarily a sign of impoverishment. If the sun has scorched the grass the burned condition is quite evident. Where it has turned brown from lack of plant food in the soil, there is a noticeable thinning out of the grass and it gives evidence of being starved. Grass may be fed with a complete fertilizer such as Scott's Turf Builder every sixty days if it is thin and unhealthy. Where a three times per year fertilizing program is carried out we suggest April, June and August. The summer and fall applications demand a little greater care as to method and amount.

METHOD OF APPLICATION.

In order to avoid burning the grass we suggest mixing 10 pounds of Turf Builder with a bushel basket full of screened soil or sand (especially on stiff soil) and applying it to each 1000 square feet. Do this when the grass is dry, and if the top dressing is done by hand it is a good plan to use the back of a rake or a broom to spread the material evenly. Otherwise streaks will show in the lawn and those spots receiving the heaviest dose may be burned.

A perfectly even distribution of Turf Builder alone at the rate suggested will not cause the grass to burn but in scattering it on by hand there is always the temptation to get too much on and also the difficulty of preventing streaks. Mixing the Turf Builder with sand or soil simplifies the task considerably and the topdressing material itself is quite beneficial to the grass. Among other things it tends to cover up the exposed roots and protect them from the glaring sun.

WATER IMPORTANT.

We advise applying Turf Builder late in the afternoon rather than during the heat of the day. Just before a rain is ideal. If you cannot select such a fortunate time, give the lawn a good, thorough soaking after the task is completed. For large areas a small spreader on the order of a lime spreader may be obtained. This will insure equal distribution of the Turf Builder and eliminate the disadvantages of hand spreading.

Mis-Fit Mixtures

A NEW YORK Experiment Station Bulletin of November, 1927, reveals some interesting things about lawn mixtures. Various brands selling in greatest volume at retail were analyzed and the findings published. Eighty-eight mixtures were tested, and here is the amazing thing: In twenty-six Timothy was the predominating variety. In exactly the same number Redtop was the favorite. Next came Rye Grass, first in twenty mixtures. Seventy-two of the eighty-eight mixtures gave preference to a quick growing grass, good for a season but not one of the three a *turf* producer. Kentucky Blue Grass, which should comprise approximately fifty per cent of a good lawn mixture, was preferred in but ten of the eighty-eight mixtures and in practically each of the ten an excessive amount of some other variety was used to offset the Blue Grass advantage. The reason for this is, of course, that Timothy, Redtop and Rye Grass are all much cheaper than Blue Grass. It is pretty safe to assume that if a lawn mixture is prepared to sell at a set price *it shouldn't be expected to produce a fine lawn.*