

Lawn Care

A discussion of the vital problems of lawn making and maintenance

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MOSS

Where It Grows and What To Do About It

WE think of moss as an appropriate covering for something *old*. The expression "moss back" implies someone who is painfully out-of-date. How appropriate that implication is when we learn that moss, according to botanists, is "presumably the relic of the original green carpet which covered the uplands of the world before any larger vegetation had been evolved." There is much interesting data available with reference to the life cycle of moss and its botanical structure but our concern is chiefly with its causes and extermination in lawns.

WHERE PREVALENT.

The fact that moss is often found on waste neglected land, around fallen tree trunks, on the roofs of old houses, and along abandoned fences makes it seem very much in place on poor, impoverished soil. It will frequently occupy places too impoverished for other plant life. Even where ground is too lacking in plant food to promote the growth of weeds, moss will frequently flourish. It is apt to appear also on ground which is water-logged and sour. Thus we may readily accept the statement of those who tell us that the two chief causes for moss in a lawn are poor drainage and impoverished soil.

CURES.

There has been a widespread notion that the presence of moss in lawns is almost positive proof that the soil is acid and sour and that lime should be used to correct this condition. Writers for years have urged farmers and others to lime soils upon which moss was found. Experiments conducted in recent years have proven beyond any doubt that lime will not check the growth of moss. In fact certain experiments conducted at Washington, D. C., indicated that lime might even encourage moss. The best method of ridding your lawn of moss is to improve the drainage in case you find it defective or fertilize the spots with a nitrogenous fertilizer. Ammonium Sulfate or Nitrate of Soda may be used separately, or better still, a complete fertilizer with a high nitrogen content such as Scott's Turf Builder, which has an analysis of 10-6-4, indicating 10 units of Nitrogen, 6 of Phosphoric Acid, and 4 of Potash. Golf course greenkeepers who have been consulted have recommended either the use of Sulfate of Ammonia or a complete fertilizer or spraying with a 5% solution of Iron Sulfate. The latter, of course, even though it might kill the moss would not correct the soil condition in such a way as to prevent its reappearance.

SUMMARY.

The presence of moss is an indication of inadequate drainage or soil impoverishment. The most effective cure then is to correct either of the conditions which is responsible. Lime is not only ineffective but may even make matters worse.

Spraying With Iron Sulfate

IN February LAWN CARE we mentioned Iron Sulfate as one of the dandelion destroyers. An actual experience with this chemical is reported by Mr. Edward M. Koch, of Canton, Ohio, who has this to say:

"I do not know what you have experienced in the use of Iron Sulfate (better known as Copperas Crystals) for Plantain and Dandelion. This chemical used one pound to one and one-half gallons of water sprinkled heavily on Plantain and Dandelion will absolutely destroy these pests. The grass will be burned for a short time but will come back in better shape. The leaves of the weeds become putrid and mushy in a very short time and the plants disappear inside of a week."

Most of the articles we have read on the above subject have advised the spraying on of the Iron Sulfate solution but according to Mr. Koch it may be sprinkled on without permanent injury to the grass. Has anyone else tried this remedy with similar results?

Recommend Leaf Mold for Shady Lawns

ONE of our good friends at Charleston, West Virginia, Mr. T. B. Linnaman writes:

"After sowing seed early in the spring I applied leaf mold as top dressing and it did the trick. It is the finest thing in the world for shady lawns. All leaves should be raked off the lawn in the fall, stacked and allowed to rot; then this leaf mold can be applied later on, either after the ground is frozen or early in the spring."

Mr. Linnaman also has this to say:

"No lawn should be raked after you start cutting it. You make holes in the lawn. Cut your grass once a week and let the clippings fall. In my thirty-five years' experience with lawn work I find that to have a good lawn you must have good seed. Your shady lawn seed is the best money can buy. It seems to me that anybody looking at my lawn would be convinced of this. There is not a weed in sight and never has been. I have looked after the lawn myself, cutting it once a week all summer, and that is what you will have to do to have a nice lawn."

Weeding Is a Waste of Money

OPINION OF MAINE CUSTOMER.

"AN experience of fifteen years with a shady lawn convinced me that weeding even in the most thorough manner is worse than useless. I took strip after strip three feet wide and on hands and knees took out every visible weed, spending hundreds of hours in doing it. I believe that the proper use of Sulfate of Ammonia and a complete fertilizer is the only way to get good lawns. Watering should be done as little as possible in spring and early summer to get deep roots. Watering when done should be four to seven days apart and then should be very thorough and deep. Grass clippings should be short and left on the lawn. Two or three pounds of Sulfate of Ammonia mixed with very dry earth should be applied and raked in. Then give the lawn a thorough soaking with the hose."

The above is the opinion expressed by Frederick C. Cannon, of South Bristol, Maine.

CITRONELLA GRASS

MR. J. Q. SHERMAN, President of the Standard Register Company, Dayton, Ohio, wrote recently to ask if we were familiar with "Citronella Grass," which keeps mosquitoes away. We immediately got in touch with the Department of Agriculture and received the following information:

Referring to your letter of February 5, the botanical name of citronella grass is *Andropogon Nardus*. It is from this grass that oil of citronella is obtained. As you probably know, the odor of this oil is objectionable to mosquitoes and is used to keep them away. So far as I have been able to ascertain, this seed is not available in the United States. The grass is said to be native to Ceylon and seems to be grown quite commonly in India and the Malay States. It is possible that seed may be obtained from some of these countries, though I understand that plantings are usually made vegetatively.

H. L. WESTOVER,
U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

We are going to try to get hold of a few pounds of Citronella Grass and hope to be able to report at some future time whether or not we do any less scratching. *Did you ever hear of this variety of grass?*

Too Good to Keep

We do not ever expect to take much space in LAWN CARE to shout the praises of Scott's Seed, but occasionally we shall take the liberty of quoting some customer who makes a particularly noteworthy statement. In a letter of December 13th, Mr. Schreiber, President of the Schreiber Products Corporation of Buffalo, New York, says:

"I have not bought any grass seed since 1924 when I started some new lawns, and wish to state that your grass seed was so satisfactory that I was not obliged to add new seed. Yours is really the best grass seed I have ever purchased and when again in the market, I will certainly bear you in mind."

Had Mr. Schreiber sowed lawn seed in which permanent turf producing grasses did not predominate he would have had much reseeding to do in the past several years.

Turf vs. Grass

GRASS lawns outnumber *turf* lawns at least two to one. In the former, weeds have every opportunity to gain a foothold, because there are plenty of bare spots. Timothy, Redtop and Rye Grass, the three cheap mixture favorites, are the *grass* lawn producers. Blue Grass and the Bents make *turf* lawns. They form the matted surface which looks even better at close range than from a distance. The sod from such a lawn clings together because of the intertwining roots.

The *grass* lawn looks fine from the street, especially just after the young blades make their appearance. Upon close inspection you can see that the ground is not more than half covered and unfortunately it never will be unless by a thick weed growth.

A cheap lawn mixture in almost every case makes a *grass* lawn. Ordinarily there are no *turf* producing varieties in it. Whenever you buy lawn seed be sure of two things: first, that it is clean (free from weeds and chaff); second, that *turf forming grasses predominate* in it. If you are not sufficiently familiar with seed to be sure of these points, then play safe and sow Scott's Lawn Seed.



Plantain Killer

MR. FRED NESSLY, clear out in Seattle, reads *LAWN CARE* and sends this suggestion for putting Plantain out of business: "I dip a sharpened hardwood stick into sulphuric 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." Thank you, Mr. Nessler.

Nurse Crop Unnecessary

WE quote from F. F. Rockwell, landscape architect and well-known author of books on horticulture:

"Nurse crops, such as oats or rye, are sometimes advocated, especially with spring sowing. If the seed mixture contains Rye Grass or even Redtop, these will provide all the nursing necessary for the finer grasses. My last experience with a nurse crop was planting oats on a lawn of several acres on a large estate. The owner insisted upon this being done on the theory that the oats, sprouting quickly, would provide desirable shade for the grass plants. A fine stand was secured and everything went fine until the oats had to be cut. Some scorching hot days followed a week or two later, and the tender grasses, without the shade to which they had become accustomed, were literally burned up."

As Mr. Rockwell has said, the removal of the nurse crop often has a bad effect upon the young grass and in a dry season it absorbs moisture needed by the grass. The only justification for the uses of a protecting crop such as rye or oats is in the seeding of a terrace where they may be used to advantage as a binder and prevent washing while the grass is

getting started. In a later issue of *LAWN CARE* the subject of seeding and sodding terraces will be discussed.

Chickweed from Sheep Manure

March 1, 1929.

O. M. SCOTT & SONS,
Marysville, Ohio.

Gentlemen:

I have at hand "A Good Lawn Gone Wrong" in which you say "The only application to the lawn other than seed had been some black top soil, sheep manure, ammonium sulfate and a worm poison."

Please take note that after having planted your seed on my lawn and after having tried to make a good lawn better, I applied sheep manure, with the result that the whole lawn was infested with chickweed, about half of the lawn being at present entirely freed from this pest by digging out bodily the whole plant and replacing with new dirt and seed.

On the other half of the lawn I have tried to eradicate the chickweed by the use of ammonium sulfate, but without any benefit.

Thought you might be interested to know my experience with sheep manure.

Very truly yours,

P. W. WOOD, JR.
W. P. Wood Lumber Corp.,
Worcester, Mass.

NOTE: Sheep manure may be obtained which has been so treated as to insure freedom from weeds. We do not believe Mr. Wood's experience need be necessarily taken as an indictment against all sheep manure.