

# Lawn Care

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## MOSS

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 The expression "moss back" implies someone who is painfully out-of-date.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 soil. It will frequently occupy places too impoverished for other plant life. The great quantity of moss thriving on apparently solid rock evidences this fact. Here it serves as a soil forming agent. Collecting and holding dust particles then decomposing itself, moss aids in the process of rock disintegration and its eventual breakdown into the soil. 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 chief causes for

moss in a lawn are poor drainage and lack of fertility.

### Cures

There has been a widespread notion that the presence of moss in lawns is almost positive proof that the soil is acid or 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.

### Control

First determine the cause of a mossy condition. Its presence is due to poor surface and underground drainage or to an impoverished soil or possibly a combination of both. A heavy growth of moss often appears on hillsides where surface drainage conditions are ideal but where there is an excess of moisture because of seepage water. Improper drainage should be corrected by installing tile if the difficulty is an impervious subsoil. When the surface drainage is faulty, change the grade.

Rake out the moss and liberally fertilize the soil with a special grass food high in nitrogen before seeding. It will be necessary to repeat the feeding each spring and fall. When the deficiency in grass nutrients is corrected the turf

will thrive and the moss will not reappear.

Lime should never be applied unless a laboratory test actually shows the soil to be quite acid or lacking in active calcium.

### Tiling Helped

"I have tried for eight years to get grass and failed until last fall. I dug up the soil and laid a system of drain tiling about ten or twelve inches deep, and turned the down spout from my porch into this and also left an opening so that I could turn the hose into it and flush during dry weather. I ordered seed from you and asked for the best grade of shady seed and sowed this on Labor Day. I used plenty of fertilizer. I got the most wonderful catch that I have ever seen and strangers as well as neighbors ask me what kind of seed I sowed and why I got such wonderful results. I fed this lawn again in March. I also fed it again early in June with your fertilizer which my neighbor divided with me."—F. E. Goldsberry, Athens, Ohio.

### Fighting Weeds at the Source

A bulletin published back in 1911 by the Maryland State Experiment Station contains this very pertinent comment:

"The question of pure seed is a very important one in weed control. There is scarcely any agricultural question of more vital importance than the question of good seed; none in which slighter differences can have greater influence upon the result; none in which there is greater opportunity for fraud. Nearly all our bad weeds have been in-

roduced in seeds of various crops, especially in grass and clover seed. Weeds are being carried every year to new localities in this way. One should be on the constant lookout, and no seed should be sown without a careful examination for weed seeds."

### Burlap Protection

"I wish to give you some information on how to grow grass quickly, which if you do not already know, is very valuable on flat surfaces and specially on slopes.

"My neighbor advised me to place burlap over the surface, pinning the same down at the corners with heavy wire after the soil had been prepared and the grass had been planted and to wet the burlap daily. In this way the sun strikes the burlap, heating the same and making the grass grow very rapidly. The burlap also prevents the birds from disturbing the seed and eating it. He told me that within two weeks after planting the seed I would have quite a heavy growth of grass, and to my surprise, this was true. I had tried for several years to grow grass in this particular location without success.

Perhaps the above information will be of some value to you."—H. C. Zimmerman, General Motors Bldg. Corp., Detroit, Mich.

### Bent Registers

"The Stolons I planted last fall have made a most beautiful lawn—truly a velvety carpet of grass—which is a delight to the eyes as well as a cushion to the feet."—J. M. Wisan, D.D.S., 1143 East Jersey, St., Elizabeth, N. J.

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