

Lawn Care

A discussion of the vital problems of lawn making and maintenance

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SPOTTED SPURGE

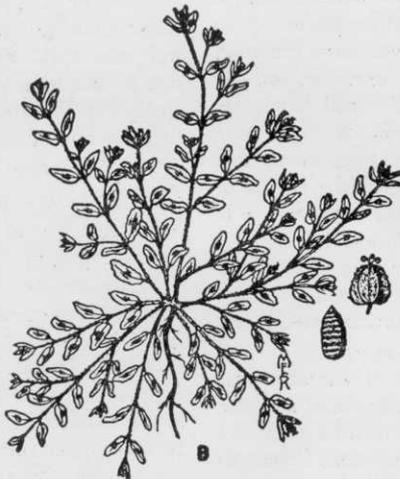
Easy to Identify

ONE of the lawn weeds most frequently sent in for identification last summer was Spotted Spurge. With the belief that it may be equally prevalent this year we selected it to feature this issue of LAWN CARE.

Spotted Spurge is readily recognizable. As the illustration shows the plant forms somewhat of a mat because of the radial basal branches which usually lie flat. Stems are slender, somewhat reddish on top, green underneath. Leaves, small, opposite, usually oblong, often blotch in the center. Has long, branching fibrous root system with many fine feeding rootlets.

Every part of this weed exudes a poisonous milky juice which will irritate the skin to a red rash or even blister it. Nothing eats this pest. Even insects leave it untouched.

Spotted Spurge is very hardy and adaptable. It is frequently seen in cracks of flagstone walks and other places where it is subject to trampling.



SPOTTED SPURGE.
Euphorbia maculata—L.

FOUND IN DRY SOILS.

Other common names for Spotted Spurge are Creeping Spurge, Milk Purslane, and Spotted Matweed. It is an annual, propagates by seeds, and blooms between June and October. Its range is throughout America except in the extreme north. In dry soils of low fertility Spurge is most frequently found. The reason is easily explained. In the thick,

fleshy stems there is enough fluid to keep the plant alive when other types of vegetation are suffering.

PREVENT SEEDING.

This lawn weed may be kept in subjection if the plants are prevented from going to seed. If noticed in midsummer and early fall the plants should be pulled up when the ground is wet or on a large area may be cut out with a hoe. Iron sulfate has also been found to have a discouraging effect

upon Spurge and may subdue plants which have not become too healthy and vigorous.

IN IMPURE SEED.

It is possible to get an infestation of Spurge in poorly cleaned seed although it is more likely to be found in clovers than among the seeds of turf grasses.

Consecutive No. 20



Earthworms Die By Capital Punishment

“A FRIEND of mine who is a great fisherman, or at least spends lots of time at the sport, conceived the idea of getting angle worms by soldering a three foot iron rod to the “hot” side of a socket of a long extension cord. He bored a hole in a stick of dry wood for a handle and pushed the rod through, using the wood for a handle and insulator at the same time. He then wet the lawn and got every worm—big and little—as fast as his son could pick them up. They came up so fast they were almost entirely out of the ground before falling into a prone position. Try this method and see for yourself how a lawn can be denuded of worms. Forgot to say that the rod must be pushed quite a ways and the wetter you have the lawn the easier it is to push the rod in and the more effect the electricity will have. Be sure to wear good rubbers over your shoes and work fast as your meter will be working overtime while the rod is in the wet ground.”—EARL WEITZEL, 403 S. Division St., Ann Arbor, Mich.

When the above item was received we thought someone might be trying to have a little fun with us. Putting earthworms “on the spot” seemed more like a gag than a practical method of warfare. But we tried the electrocution idea and are glad to report that the results exceeded our fondest hopes. The worms began to arrive at the surface a few seconds after the “juice” was turned on and the circle affected was probably two feet in diameter.

With this experiment so successfully completed the thought came to us that here was an opportunity for someone to put a gadget on the market which would not only “de-worm” a lawn but provide fishermen with bait in abundance. Like a lot of good ideas this one got away,

for behold in the catalog of Marshall Field and Company is listed a worm catcher for fishermen and it is operated on the same principle as that explained by Mr. Weitzel. What an age!



How to Kill Toadstools

DURING moist, warm, muggy weather Toadstools frequently appear in lawns. They are more apt to develop in soil that is rich in organic matter. The ordinary process of mowing will sometimes destroy them but the use of a chemical may be necessary to control persistent infestations. Here is the formula recommended by the Department of Agriculture at Washington:

“Soak the ground thoroughly with Sulfate of Copper or Bordeaux Mixture. Another method is to loosen the soil and soak with Iron Sulfate using one pound to 1½ gallons of water. The Bordeaux Mixture is preferred as it does little or no damage to the grass.”

The following is a little more complicated but is suggested by Edward C. Vick, garden editor of the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph:

“Dissolve one pound of copper sulfate in an earthen or wooden vessel. Permit this to soak for a day to enable it to dissolve. In another vessel, when the copper sulfate is ready for use, dissolve a pound of quicklime. Add the limewater to the copper sulfate and water to make six gallons. Make holes in the lawn by using a garden fork over that area which is infested with toadstools and for two feet in advance of the direction in which they are extending. Apply the solution four times at intervals of one week.”