

Lawn Care

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TO LOVERS OF BEAUTIFUL TURF

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NIMBLE WILL

Other Names—Drop Seed Grass, Wire Grass.

Perennial—Propagates by seeds and by rooting at the joints.

Seed Time—September to October.

Range—From Maine to Minnesota and southward to the Gulf.

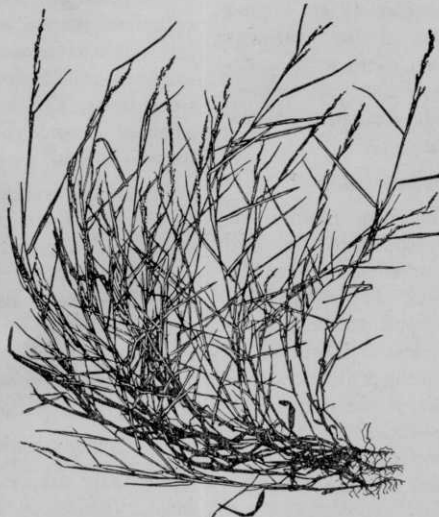
Habitat—Lawns, both in open areas and in woods or in shady places around buildings.

This weed is a creeping type of low growing, slender stemmed, small leafed grass. It has underground stems and spreads freely in lawns. Its tough, interlacing, fibrous roots make a sod which is very difficult to break up. A single plant may in time completely occupy as much as a square foot of surface. Because of its spreading, branching and creeping nature, Nimble Will makes a thick growth which is often mistaken for a desirable lawn variety.

LEAVES LONG AND SLENDER.

The stems of Nimble Will are ten inches to two feet long, somewhat flat-

tened, usually prostrate at the base and often rooting at the lower joints and from these joints flowering stalks are erected. The leaves are very narrow being no more than an eighth of an inch wide and rough to the touch. The panicle (irregular flower cluster where the seeds ripen) is very slender, weak and bending.



NIMBLE WILL, *Muhlenbergia Difussa*.

DIFFICULT TO
ERADICATE.

By its very nature of growth, Nimble Will qualifies as a troublesome lawn pest. It is hard to eradicate because of its re-seeding habit. Comparatively few people who have this weed in their lawns know it by name but they are familiar with it by sight.

Nimble Will is particularly unsightly when dormant during late winter and early spring. Its brown, dead looking growth has an appearance similar to dead crab grass. However, it need not be confused with the latter, since Nimble Will does not flatten against the ground like crab grass, and, in addition, the plants are much more leafy.



MEANS OF CONTROL.

Where Nimble Will appears in fields that can be cultivated its suppression is not difficult. In lawns, however, it is a pest for which there is no control method except hand-digging. Of course it is important to remove the maturing plants before the seeds ripen. As in the case of Crab Grass, Nimble Will may be smothered out by covering an infested area with boards or tarred paper.



Compost for Lawn Topdressing

EVERY golf course that makes any pretense of having good greens keeps a supply of compost for use in topdressing them several times during the year. The purpose of this treatment is to maintain an even surface by working this material into the low, uneven places, and to provide a surface of new soil for the grass roots.

WHAT COMPOST IS.

Compost is an intimate mixture of humus-forming materials with soil and sand. After mixing, it is allowed to decompose for a period of time so that weed seeds are destroyed and the number of friendly soil bacteria increased. A good compost, containing a liberal quantity of organic matter, is not only favorable for the multiplication of bacteria, which liberate plant food to grass, but also promotes aeration of the soil.

MAKING COMPOST.

The humus-forming materials for a compost pile may consist of animal manures, peat moss, or other partially decayed vegetable matter.

The actual compost pile is built up in alternate layers of soil, manure or substitute organic materials and sand. The proportions will vary according to the quality of soil used in the pile. If it is a

good garden loam equal parts of soil and manure with one-fourth part coarse sand should give good results. If the soil tends toward a heavy clay as much as two parts manure and one part sand may be necessary. With real sandy soils, ordinary clay should be substituted for sand and at least two parts of manure used to one of the native sandy soil.

As the alternate layers are being placed commercial fertilizer should be mixed into the mass, using about one-half pound to a cubic yard.

ONE YEAR NEEDED.

A compost pile may be built up of 8 or 10 layers of these various materials. It should be kept moist, and turned over every two or three months. This aids the decomposition process and insures a complete mixture of soil and organic matter. At least a year is needed for thorough decomposition and destruction of weed seeds. This latter is most important as there are sure to be many weeds in the materials used for compost.

After the compost is ready it should be screened through a quarter inch mesh screen following which it is ready for use as a topdressing material. The coarse material should be saved and incorporated into the next pile. If possible a new compost pile should be started every year so that a continuous supply of topdressing is available.

DISTRIBUTING TOPDRESSING.

Probably the easiest way to topdress a lawn, without purchasing special equipment, is to dump the material in small piles and then spread it out over the turf using the back of an iron rake. It can be worked down into the turf with the same implement or with a stiff straw push broom. Sometimes a flexible metal door mat is used. For the average lawn, topdressing should be at least one-fourth inch deep. If the surface is very uneven as much as a half inch can be applied



without smothering the grass. To cover a lawn area of 1000 square feet to a depth of a quarter inch about one cubic yard of compost is needed.

SEEDING AND FERTILIZING.

Seeding the lawn before topdressing is an excellent practice. The compost makes a fine covering and bed for the seed. A lawn can also be fertilized at the same time by mixing the proper amount of commercial plant food into the topdressing material. Mixing should be thorough.

USE OF LEAVES IN COMPOST.

While it is possible to incorporate manures and peat directly into the compost pile, leaves or other decomposed matter should be allowed to rot at least a year. These materials should be placed where they will be kept moist at all times and stirred occasionally. Decomposition will be faster if a complete mineral fertilizer is incorporated into the mass at the rate of about one pound to every cubic yard of composting material. A sprinkling of lime is also beneficial.



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."



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!



Runway for Weeders

"IN August, 1932, *LAWN CARE*, Mr. Hindle mentions that getting after plantain and dandelions is a back breaking job. It will not be if you work it this way. Get 4, 6, or 8 inch spike nails and two long pieces of old rope or string. Then make a loop at the ends of each piece and after pushing two spikes into the ground 1 to 2 feet apart to make a runway. Commence at one end and work down so you will not miss any weeds. If you do not use a runway of this kind you are inclined to wander all around the lawn where you happen to see a weed. You can sit down to the job when you work by my method."—H. G. BARNES, 41 Franklin Street, Boston, Mass.



Tack Puller Joins Weeding Weapons

Another weapon to be used in weed control has been proposed for use by the

attacking army. For this suggestion we are indebted to John A. Kunz of Huntington, Pa.:

"The comments on the last page of the current issue of *LAWN CARE* concerning weeding tools are very interesting. My favorite weapon is a hand tack puller which may be purchased in any hardware or variety store for ten cents. The curve of the shaft and the broad blade with the notch in it make it both easy to handle and irresistible to the weeds, cutting off the roots several inches below the surface, and not injuring the surrounding grass."



Scott Publications

Lawns, a small booklet of condensed facts about the making of a new lawn and the improvement of an old one.

Bent Lawns, an illustrated booklet which tells how to make and maintain a Creeping Bent lawn.

Converting to Creeping Bent, folder explaining four methods of remaking and improving an old lawn by using Bent.

Lawn Making and Maintenance. Sixty pages of specific information that will be especially helpful in the building or care of large areas.

The Putting Green. An illustrated book telling how to construct and maintain grass greens. Gratis to greens chairmen, greenkeepers, or any golf club officers. To others at actual cost of 25 cents.

There have been twenty-three previous issues of *Lawn Care* and the following lawn pests have been discussed: Plantain, Crab Grass, Dandelions, Moss, Grubs and Beetles, Chickweed, Buckhorn, Ground Ivy, Yarrow, Earthworms, Heal-all, Ants, Speedwell, Creeping Buttercup, Sod Web-Worms, Moles, Knot-Grass, Sorrel, Quack-Grass, Spotted Spurge, Yellow Trefoil, and Goose Grass. For the complete series please allow 10 cents to cover mailing cost.