

Lawn Care

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O. M. SCOTT & SONS CO. MARYSVILLE, OHIO

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SEDGE—NOT A GRASS

THE Sedge family (*Cyperaceae*) is a large and thriving one. There are probably three thousand species scattered all over the world. They resemble grasses as well as rushes, yet are a separate family in themselves. A common identifying feature of most Sedges is their three-cornered and three-sided stem with no joints. These stems are angled and solid, not round and hollow like grass stems.

Generally speaking the Sedges are inclined to prefer a moist soil. Marshes and wet lands and other waste areas recently drained are frequently headquarters for various members of this family. When soil from these low spots is used in the construction of a lawn it will likely contain tubers or root stalks which will sprout. Such roots, if not removed first by care-



Sedge (*Cyperus esculentus*)

ful screening, will result in coarse growth, marring the beauty of an otherwise good lawn.

Important Species

While we are selecting the variety known as Chufa or *Cyperus esculentus* for purposes of general discussion because it is more frequently found in lawns, there are several other species worthy of mention. Nutgrass (*C. rotundus*) is more commonly found in the south, although it often gets as far north as New Jersey. Another Sedge of which a number of specimens come to us for identi-

fication each year is Low Galingale, *C. diandrus*. It is quite similar to Chufa in appearance and soil preference, but is an annual. It is not as aggressive as the other types. Another annual Sedge is *Kyllinga pumila*, named for Peder Kylling, a Danish botanist of the 17th

century. As with other annual weeds, the annual Sedges may be controlled by preventing seed production and improving soil fertility.

Commonly found in none-too-well-cleaned Kentucky Bluegrass is another type of Sedge belonging to the genus *Carex*. There are at least 185 species in this group. Muhlenberg's Sedge (*Carex Muhlenbergii*) is its complete name. It is not particularly objectionable in lawns and as a forage crop is of some value in the south.

Spreads By Rootstalks

Most likely to be troublesome in a lawn is the type of Sedge with underground root stalks. Such a weed is Chufa or Yellow Nut-grass. Chufa is also known by many other names in different sections of the country. Some of these names are Nut Sedge, Northern Nut Grass, Coco Nut, Rush Nut, Earth Almond and Edible Galingale. To be specific its name *Cyperus esculentus*, means edible nut sedge. It is a hardy perennial that bears edible tubers having a flavor very similar to that of the almond.

This type of Sedge seldom produces seed, depending almost entirely on underground tubers and stems for propagation. In common with most of the other Sedges, Chufa is very grass-like in appearance. It is yellowish green in color. The scaly underground stems bear small fleshy tubers which send up new stems at close intervals.

Method of Control

Like Quack Grass and Canada Thistle the stems and underground tubers of Sedge must be starved out. There is a difference of opinion as to the success to be had in ridding a lawn of Sedge

by simply providing better drainage, moist soil being regarded as the favored spot for this weed. The Ohio Experiment Station believes that drainage is not enough, although this is important if final eradication is to be achieved. The individual plants must be pulled out when the ground is soft, special care being taken to get as much of the underground stem as can be removed. If a new plot of ground to be put into lawn is infested with Sedge of the Yellow Nut-grass type, by all means let it lie fallow through the summer and cultivate it periodically to remove the rootstalks.

Dandelions Cleaned

Another dandelion story was torn from the house organ of the General Electric Company by Mr. Charles S. Ruffner, a customer at Schenectady, New York. It reads as follows:

"G. C. Adams in the Central District G. E. office at Chicago believes he has solved the dandelion problem with his G. E. vacuum cleaner. He works on the assumption that if the dandelions can be prevented from seeding, the day will be saved. Taking his cleaner to the yard he attaches a long extension cord. He then attaches the tube and the head for cleaning upholstery. Starting the motor he drops the head over the nearest patch of white blossoms and they disappear like magic. When he has covered the area within reach of the hose he moves the cleaner, repeating the operation and soon all the blossoms are gone. Then he is free to dig or dose the plants themselves."

Dandelion killing experiences are becoming most intriguing. Are there others?

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