Lawn Care

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF

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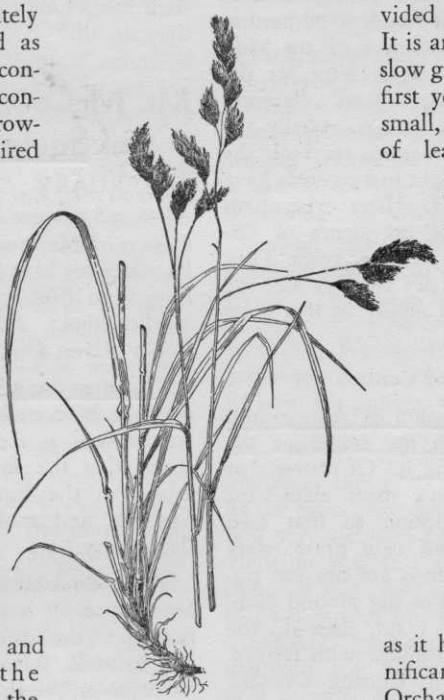
ORCHARD GRASS

IN SPITE of the fact that we here discuss a species of grass which is valuable in the agricultural field, it should be very definitely classified as a weed as far as lawns are concerned. A weed is considered "a plant growing where it is desired that something else should grow." So Orchard Grass qualifies as a lawn weed.

Description.

Orchard grass is a bunch grass. The stems are crowded and surrounded at the base by many leafy shoots. Orchard Grass is easily recognized even in the early stages. The leaf blades are long, soft and folded V-shape, the sheath which is at the base of each leaf and wrapped around the stem, is strongly compressed. The edges are united below into a closed tube. When in bloom the branches spread like the toes of a bird's foot; hence the name Cock's Foot by which Orchard Grass is most familiarly known in Europe.



ORCHARD GRASS,
(Dactylis glomerata)

Characteristics.

Orchard Grass is very drouth-resistant and thrives in almost any soil, provided it is not too wet. It is an early grass but a slow grower. During the first year the plants are small, consisting chiefly of leafy shoots from short root stocks. The second year the shoots increase and flowering stems appear.

The cutting of Orchard Grass does not discourage it. The plants recover quickly after mowing. In the shade this grass is especially at home, a characteristic which accounts for the name "Orchard" as it has no further significance. Sometimes Orchard Grass is mistaken for Crab Grass and in many instances thought to be a desirable lawn variety. In reality it is much worse than some weeds because during drouth when good grasses are having a tough time, Orchard Grass is thriving. Its bunchy,

coarse nature makes it very unsightly. Moreover the fact that it is a perennial makes it difficult to discourage.

How Introduced Into Lawns.

There is a possibility that Orchard Grass infestation may result from the introduction of seed through carelessly prepared lawn mixtures. It is not likely that it would be intentionally used, because the average cost of the seed is such that there is no price incentive. Small amounts, of course, might be found among the seeds of other grasses which had not been thoroughly recleaned. There is also a good chance that the seeds of Orchard Grass may be introduced into a lawn through the use of top soil from a meadow or pasture field. The use of manure of any kind might very definitely account for the presence of Orchard Grass. Recently applied manure is not necessarily the carrier—seeds in manure used on the lawn years ago might just recently have become established. Many experiment stations report the prevalence of Orchard Grass these past few years. They attribute it to the dry weather and the already mentioned ability of this grass to withstand it.

Means of Control.

A heavy application of Ammonium Sulfate applied to the center of the plant will often kill it. Of course that means enough time must elapse for complete disintegration so that seed may be sowed and new grass established. If the clumps are not too numerous it is better to dig around each, lift out the entire plant, then fill the hole with soil, and follow with fertilizing and reseeding. Cutting Orchard Grass time after time serves to flatten it out to the point where it becomes extremely unsightly. The prostrate stems will at the same time smother out the grass over which they extend.

Orchard Grass seems particularly resistant to chemical treatment, more so in fact than any of the common grasses. F. V. Grau of Pennsylvania State College says:

"At Lehigh University where the athletic field was sprayed with a mixture of sodium chlorate and sodium arsenite for the control of various weeds, Orchard Grass was the first to recover from the effects of the spray. In two weeks, when 90 per cent of the weeds had succumbed and the bluegrass and fescue were just recovering and beginning to get green, the Orchard Grass was green and thrifty. It is my opinion that heavy fertilization and higher cutting will tend to discourage Orchard Grass, particularly if water is used from time to time to supplement the rainfall."

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Mr. McCowen Gets Plenty of Squirrel Advice

FEBRUARY "Lawn Care" contained a letter from Mr. R. V. McCowen of Maplewood, N. J., in which he asked for help in a squirrel ejecting campaign. First advisor is Mr. Herbert V. Beechhold, 21275 Kenwood Ave., Rocky River, Ohio who writes:

"I scatter the ashes from my furnace over the lawn each year and the squirrels as well as the moles stay out. It seems that the sharp particles in the ashes cut the feet and noses of the squirrels and moles, thereby driving them away."

The second bit of advice is of a different type. It is somewhat of a glorification of the squirrel and comes from Mr. Ernst Z. Bower of Olney, Illinois. "I wonder," writes druggist Bower, "what Mr. McCowen would do if he lived in Olney. We have here Olney White Squirrels and they are just that because they are found nowhere else in the world. There are albinos—but our white squirrels are not true albinos. They are a cross between the white and

the grey squirrels. We protect them and feed them—they do not wander from the city limits—seldom going to the woods. They are tame and will eat from ones hand. In order to keep them from burying nuts and digging up the lawn, I crack the nuts, about a quart every night for their morning feed. In the spring we roll our lawns with a heavy roller—and we have as nice lawns in Olney as you see any place—but the squirrels do almost as good a job of honeycombing our lawns as the freezing and thawing. My suggestion to Mr. McCowen is: crack the nuts, but do not kill the squirrels. Our squirrel population is between 500 and 700. These squirrels live here but do not breed when taken away."

Third and more "brutal" counselor is Supt. E. G. Nolte of Belmont Memorial Park, Fresno, California: "For ground squirrels, which do much damage here to grain and fruit and gnaw bark of trees, we buy jute balls or make them from rags or burlap the size of a golf ball, soak them in carbon bisulfide and throw a ball in a hole, then throw a burning match in and close the hole of that den."

Number four is Mr. E. P. Felt, chief entomologist of the Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories, Stamford, Connecticut who offers this suggestion:

"I would suggest spraying the lawn with Black Leaf 40 or Nicotine Sulfate —they are practically the same, using one-half pint to 100 gallons of water, and making the first application at the beginning of the period when squirrels dig in the lawn, and possibly repeat it two or three times. This nicotine sulfate is credited with a repellent effect on dogs and I think it would be worth while trying with squirrels. This is simply a suggestion; it has not been tested."

Have you a lawn problem? Surely we can find the answer among the 200,000 readers of this bulletin.

Grass Cutting Discussed By Landscape Architect

PERUSING a recent issue of "Lawn Care," I was much interested in the experience of Mr. Everett L. Williams in mowing his lawn at 1½ inches and allowing the clippings to remain on the ground.

Books, pamphlets and lectures continually advance this theory but are apparently satisfied to stop right there. Actually there are very definite reasons why this method is effective besides the natural mulching and feeding effect. There are other reasons more important than those attributed to the food value of clippings.

First, assuming we are working with the average lawn containing much Kentucky Bluegrass: Branching high from the ground, it will not stand close cutting. Therefore 1½ inches gives it a chance for life rather than actually beheading and killing it.

Second, our grasses are a complete chemical manufacturing plant in themselves. The food is made in the blades through the process called photosynthesis. We need not go into the actual process as we are interested only in how the cutting will best maintain it at maximum capacity for good results. I have never heard thoroughly discussed the point of how high to let the grass grow before cutting. There is a very definite, practical reason for knowing just this point. Given this chemical plant and knowing that grass to grow strong and rugged must have a STEADY food supply, then we must maintain the producing plant at as near normal production as possible. To do this, I have found by repeated experiment that if the grass is mowed when it has grown ½ inch to ¾ inch best results will be had. Our lawn with one top-dressing in spring has had to be mowed every other day to maintain this production. At first glance it

would seem a heavy chore. Really it is nothing of the kind for with the mower sharp, grass is quickly cut and clippings show not at all. Actually less time and effort is needed than in making heavy cuts.

Now something else deserves the credit which I think Mr. Williams is giving to the clippings. I would give the credit to the fact that food values are held steady, making for strong growth both in top and roots, making the grass more resistant both to drouth and disease.

Our lawn has been watered just once this season during the very hot weather of early July. It had a real wetting, however, the 7500 square feet being soaked for two full days. Very little browning has been in evidence.

Perhaps some of your readers are lawn cranks enough to want to try out this system.

GUY M. WRIGHT, L.A.
81 Woodland St., Bristol, Conn.

Interesting Book on Seeds By Vernon Quinn

"Seeds—Their Place in Life and Legend" is the title of a book by Vernon Quinn, published in 1936 by the Frederick A. Stokes Company, 443 Fourth Avenue, New York City. The price is $2. We recommend it to garden clubs and to others who are interested in how seeds of all kinds spread and how their peculiarities have been responsible for much superstition, especially among the Indians. Here is an item regarding the old, familiar plantain, the first weed to be featured in Lawn Care:

"Plantain in old folklore was known as 'Devil's Shoestring' from its long spikes of seed-pods and the belief that wherever the plant was found, the devil was not far away. [Today, many report it is the devil himself.] This legend, accompanying the early colonists to America, may have been the basis for the Indian's name for plantain. They called it 'Englishman's weed,' for they claimed that whenever they saw the plant they knew an English habitation was somewhere near."

What Has Gone Before

In previous issues of "Lawn Care" the following lawn problems have been discussed:

1928—Dandelions.
1929—Moss, Grubs and Beetles, Chickweed, Buckhorn.
1930—Ground Ivy, Yarrow, Earthworms, Heal-all, Ants.
1931—Speedwell, Creeping Buttercup, Moles, Knot Grass.
1932—Sheep Sorrel, Quack Grass, Spurge, Trefoil, Goose Grass.
1933—Nimble Will, Knawel, Terraces, Shepherd's Purse, Chinch Bugs.
1934—Sedge, Shade, Purslane.
1935—Peppergrass, Shade, Crab Grass, Summer Injury to Turf.
1936—White Clover in Lawns, Poa Annua, Henbit, Fall Seeding, Foxtail.
1937—Honeycombed Soil, Control of Grubs.

The full set of 45 bulletins including index will be furnished in heavy paper binding for 25c to cover mailing cost. An attractive imitation leather ring binder, with mechanical pencil attached, containing all bulletins, index, condensed issue of "Lawns," graph paper for charting your lawn and capacity for issues of "Lawn Care" for the next several years, will be furnished for one dollar prepaid. More than twenty-five thousand of these binders are in use. For 20 cents additional you may have your name gold stamped on the cover.