

Lawn Care

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

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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 Crabgrass and in other 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.

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.

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.

Orchard Grass seems particularly resistant to chemical treatment, more so in fact than any of the common grasses. 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 beneath.

Dr. Fred V. Grau of Pennsylvania State College says:

"It is my opinion that heavy fertilization and higher cutting will tend to discourage Orchard Grass, particularly if water is used to supplement rainfall."

Another Insect Strikes New England

Earwig is the name of a relatively new arrival in the realm of insect pests. This bug resembles an elongated, brown beetle, $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in length. Besides having a foul odor, its appearance is made still more repulsive by a pair of fierce looking forceps extending from its abdomen. The pincers are seldom used, and its wings are unfolded for flight only infrequently.

Earwigs often come inside the house and lurk in dark corners or closets. They are more terrorizing because of their vicious appearance, actions and habits than for any great economic damage that they cause. They live on grass and other plant roots, also on leaves which they mutilate very much as do the caterpillars. Flowers and other ornamentals are frequently marred by feeding habits of Earwigs.

This new visitor to our shores comes from Europe, hence it has been named European Earwig. It seems to have made itself most conspicuous in Rhode Island and also in the west coast states.

Control

The best way to control Earwigs is to prepare and spread an effective poisoned bait made by mixing thoroughly 12 pounds of wheat bran with 1 pound of Sodium Fluosilicate. Then add 1 quart of fish oil and again mix well. This is sufficient bait to scatter thinly over five to eight thousand square feet of lawn. Earwigs often lay their eggs in the soil among grass roots so the lawn is the logical place for the poison bait treatment. The poison will not damage the grass. To be effective the lawn should not be watered for two days after treatment.

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