

# Lawn Care

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## EARLY FALL LAWN PROGRAM



When LAWN CARE made its bow in the fall of 1928, at least eighty percent of all lawn seed was being sown in the spring. Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that the figure is now close

to the fifty percent mark. Good lawn lovers have done this for two reasons: First, because authorities have for years advocated such a practice and, second, because after trying out the idea and observing the experiences of others, they have come to the conclusion that it pays. To bring about a change in custom, even one as common as choosing a time to seed one's lawn takes many years and an accumulation of convincing evidence.

As late as 1925 scarcely a retail store even offered lawn seed to its patrons in the summer and fall. It was looked upon as quick selling, highly seasonal spring merchandise and disappeared from the counters before the end of May. Now lawn seed remains on conspicuous display through the summer and into early winter. Only Christmas toys crowd it out during the Holiday Season and even then it occasionally finds its way into a father's sock on Christmas morning.

The designation "fall" has formerly been the seeding recommendation but even those sponsoring it usually set the

early date as August 15th and the finish line as October 15th. More than half the period thus falls within what our calendar calls summer, so correctly stated, the ideal seeding is late summer and early fall.

### Here Are the Reasons

Specific advantages in the late summer and early fall seeding program may be listed as follows:

1. Nature has chosen it for her own seeding time. You couldn't follow a better guide. Extremes of heat and dryness are seldom experienced after the grass gets started.
2. By the middle of August the days have become shorter, meaning that the soil is losing moisture less rapidly through evaporation. There are usually heavier dews to supplement rainfall. The sun is working on a shorter shift. Young grass thus has an excellent chance of taking hold.

3. The soil is warm to a considerable depth, thus providing an ideal condition for roots to penetrate far.



In spring seedings grass plants are apt to take shallow root. The plants of fall-sown grasses also stool or tiller out, Nature's provision for safeguarding vegetation against the rigors of winter.

4. From the latter part of August through the remainder of the summer and fall, rains are more likely to be of a soft, gentle nature, insuring maximum penetration. This fact, coupled with the warm days and cool nights, gives grasses almost perfect growing conditions.

5. Weeds always come into any lawn discussion. They mostly go dormant in the fall, thus giving new grass a free hand. The lawns you see today which present the least weed problem are probably those which were seeded at the proper time.

It is unwise to rely entirely upon the season. It won't compensate for everything. Soil preparation should not be neglected. Winter injury to grass after a fall seeding most often results from improper seedbed preparation. It may also be caused by failure to provide the grass with adequate food. Thus it should not be assumed that because you seed at the proper time other factors may be neglected, especially to the extent of sowing the wrong kind or quality of seed.

The great upsurge in new lawn making is a post-war expectation but each year, regardless of the minimum of new buildings or other suppressing influences, there are those who, because of having hopeless lawns, follow the urge to start all over again. For such



aspirants the timeliness of seeding should be carefully noted, also the importance of selecting good soil and preparing it well. To all such we recommend our booklet "Good Lawns," also the Lawn Care Bulletins Nos. 46 and 59. They deal with the subject of soils and necessity for adequate organic matter. The author of a book on lawn making refers to the seedbed in this way—

the top inch he likens to the bed clothes; the next two to four inches to the mattress, and the remaining depth to the springs! A very apt analogy.

### Turf Builder Available

Many lawns have been getting along on a restricted diet during the last couple of years. Fortunately the War Food Administration has released more materials for lawn fertilizers so there is enough Turf Builder to go around this fall. This is good news since a lawn needs the stimulation of the right plant food after a few months of scorching and devitalizing weather. Turf Builder should be applied just before seeding.

### Fall Care

When you start off new grass, sprinkle often enough to keep the soil from drying out, but be sure not to flood it to the extent that it becomes waterlogged. Thin turf needs more water than thick turf because more moisture is lost in evaporation where much soil is exposed to the sun. Eighty percent of the weight of grass clippings consists of moisture, thus there is a close correlation between mowing and watering technique. A good soaking of the lawn after it has been mowed restores the moisture and helps the grass to overcome the shock sustained by the mowing. For a complete discussion on this subject, read LAWN CARE No. 60.

The mowing of new grass is of concern to all lawn owners. When considerable new grass is coming up in an established lawn, the mowing routine should conform to the needs of the new arrivals, since the mature grass can better take care of itself. This means closer mowing than usually recommended so the young grass is not strangled by a heavy growth of the old plants. A height of cut of about one inch should be all right.

In brief, here is the late summer lawn program:

1. Plan the job for late August or very early September depending on when the heavy dews start in your locality.

2. If the lawn is quite poor and weedy, follow a drastic cross-raking and mowing program. Set the mower close. Scarify the soil as much as possible.

3. Apply Turf Builder at 10 lbs. per 1,000 square feet when the vegetation is dry. Seeding can follow immediately.

4. Seed at rate of 3 to 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet. In extremely shaded areas, use the Scott seed for dense shade. Roll lightly to firm the seed into the soil.

5. Germination can be hastened by regular watering but once started, the lawn must be watered often enough to keep the soil constantly moist—two or three times a day—until the grass is well rooted.

6. Mow regularly and rather closely to give the young grass a chance. Raise the height of cut to 1½ or 2 inches after the grass is off to a good start.

## Problems of Watering

The best methods of watering lawns in the summer were described in *LAWN CARE* No. 60 issued several years ago. The basic facts about watering are so important that we are repeating here some of the main ones.

**How Often?** Just as often as the upper inch of soil shows signs of dryness. Examine the soil regularly. Don't wait until the grass shows signs of wilting. By keeping an even supply of moisture the lawn will look better and less total water will be required.

**Sandy Soils** or those underlaid with gravel dry very rapidly. They may need to be watered every day but become moist with less water than required for clay soils. The larger particles of sandy soils will not hold as

much moisture as clay soils and any excess is lost in drainage water.

**Heavier Soils** can be watered less frequently but in heavier doses. Watch clay soils so they don't dry so much as to crack open. When they do it takes twice as much water to restore normal moisture.

**Don't Sprinkle, irrigate.** Put on enough water so the soil is really moist. Hardly anyone has the patience to hold the hose long enough to thoroughly water a sizeable lawn. Rotating or revolving sprinklers are better, canvas hose is good.

**Water Any Time,** in full sun or in the dark. It makes no difference as long as the lawn needs water.

**Chlorine** in city water is not harmful. Cold water doesn't hurt.

**If You Can't Water** then don't mow very often, either, during dry periods. Cut the grass as high as possible unless Crabgrass is seeding severely. Dry weather is a good time to get rid of weeds by digging or spot control with chemicals. Feed by applying Turf Builder in mid-August so the grass will have the benefit of adequate food as soon as fall rains renew growth.

## Control of Chinch Bugs

SIRS:

I have enjoyed your *Lawn Care* right along, but particularly your No. 80 on the Chinch Bug. In your interest and that of the public, may I contribute to the subject the following?

During the drought and hot weather in July and August, 1943, the first devastating infestation of the long haired Chinch Bug occurred on the golf links of the Elkridge Club in Baltimore. We called in expert entomologists but after two weeks of intensive work, nothing satisfactory was achieved.

I then personally took over and with the help of our greensman, we experimented—carrying out over eighty trials empirically with different mixtures of various insecticides. We finally hit upon a mixture of Black Arrow (McCormick & Co.) 4 parts and Derris Powder 1 part, which killed the insects on contact within the hour. Our procedure which brought the best result was as follows:

We watered down the green; dusted the mixture (5 pounds to 1,000 sq. ft. or on the average of 30 pounds to the green); switched this in with long bamboo poles. We also dusted the aprons and areas about the green. The result was the total destruction of the Chinch Bug. The ingredients which did the work was pyrethrum and rotenone which was contained in our mixture.

DR. RONALD T. ABERCROMBIE  
Elkridge Club  
Baltimore, Md.

## Crabgrass Is Here

August is the time when the ugly seeding heads of Crabgrass appear. That's the real danger signal because it indicates the plant is trying to perpetuate itself and sow a crop for the next year.

Regular mowing will not prevent this seeding because some seed heads escape even very close mowing. It's necessary to rake and cross rake to pull up the prostrate stems so they will be cut off by the mower. Catch the clippings and destroy them.

It is all right to feed and seed while Crabgrass is still vigorous since the first frost will kill the Crabgrass and the young turf grasses can then grow unmolested. It is possible to enjoy a fine lawn in the fall in spite of a severe summer invasion of Crabgrass.

## Ant Control

With a round stick or other tool, ream a hole 6 to 8 inches deep into the center of an ant nest, and with a small funnel placed in the hole to center of nest, pour in about one-half pint of used crank case oil, so that it floods the deeper recesses of the nest. This destroys the ants, and the exposed grass is not affected. Try it and see the effect.

W. L. YEOMANS, M.D.

Bucyrus, Ohio

## The Scott Publications

- 1928 Plantain, Sodium Chlorate.
- 1929 Compost, Moss, Web Worms, Iron Sulphate, Buckhorn.
- 1930 Ground Ivy, Yarrow, Earthworms, Heal-All, Ants.
- 1931 Speedwell, Creeping Buttercup, Moles, Knotweed.
- 1932 Sheep Sorrel, Quackgrass, Spurge, Trefoil, Goosegrass.
- 1933 Nimble Will, Knawel, Terraces, Shepherd's Purse, Ground Covers.
- 1934 Sedge, Purslane, Spring Seeding, Dandelions, Summer Feeding.
- 1935 Peppergrass, Shade, Summer Injury.
- 1936 Clover, Poa Annuu, Henbit, Fall Seeding, Foxtail.
- 1937 Honeycombed Soil, Grubs, Orchard Grass, Soils, Turf Diseases.
- 1938 Liming, Dandelions, Chinch Bugs, Bur-lap Cover, Wild Garlic.
- 1939 Chickweed, Mowing, Dandelions, Fall Seeding, Poison Ivy.
- 1940 Organic Matter, Watering, Vitamins.
- 1941 Winter Affects Grass, Fertilizing, Moneywort, Mallow, Weed Control.
- 1942 Care of Tools, Tree Feeding, Crabgrass, Devil's Paint Brush.
- 1943 Spring Program, Gardening, Pennywort, Dogs Beware, Winter Damage.
- 1944 Weather Factors, Chinch Bugs.

**Paper Bound File**—25c postage paid including all above bulletins.

**Loose Leaf Binder**—\$1.00 postage paid, all LAWN CARE issues to date and room for several years' future bulletins.

**Good Lawns**—That amateur gardener's guide to better lawns. Contains a complete outline for building new lawns and improving old ones. Free.

**Bent Lawns**—Illustrated new edition. Tells about the most beautiful of all lawn grasses—Scotts Bentgrass.

O. M. SCOTT & SONS CO.



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