

Lawn Care

PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES YEARLY FOR LAWNTHUSIASTS

TIME FOR A LAWN INVENTORY

FIXING up lawns in the fall has been advocated by LAWN CARE for many years. All turf authorities agree on the wisdom of this principle.

Many people ask, "What do you mean by fall? When does it start and when does it end?" Perhaps as good a starting indicator as any is the beginning of heavy dews, usually around late August or early September. The season continues until heavy frosts.

Sometimes a hot dry period is encountered when the calendar says it is time to get busy with the lawn. The question then arises whether to proceed as planned or to wait until the dry period passes. The answer is to go ahead for there is nothing in the fall lawn program that will be rendered ineffective by drouth. Seed, grassfood and weed control will all react satisfactorily with the advent of sufficient moisture. If the program is postponed,

ensuing rains may continue for so long that the work is prevented.

Late Summer, Early Fall Best

Fall sown grasses root deeper; they stool out and form a more compact, weed resistant sod. They get the benefit of the usual lazy fall rains which cause less washing than do the dashing spring showers. A clinching reason has always been that grass sown at this time gets the jump on weeds.

So while we confess that most lawn seed is still sown in the spring, as a
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Grass Seed Crop Suffers Near Miss

During the past four critical years, Mother Nature broke all production records of important food crops. This year the outlook is again bright and we should all be grateful.

Strangely enough, growing conditions that produce record food crops have been unfavorable for the production of grass seed. Not since 1937 has there been a big grass seed harvest. Since then the yields of important varieties have been successively less until this year they approached the vanishing point in some of the largest producing areas.

It was exactly such vagaries of Nature that the Government recognized when it exempted grass seed from price ceilings in the very beginning of OPA.

Meanwhile, turf needs have increased by leaps and bounds. During the war
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matter of habit, the facts have always shown that fall is the better time. Institutions with large investments in seed sow in the fall.

Fall also offers advantages as a season for feeding lawns as well as seeding them. The soft, deep-soaking rains take the grassfood down into the soil where it is available to the reaching root tips of established grass and where it attracts the new roots of young grass. Warm days and cool nights, combined with ample quantities of food, result in a strong growth of grass that anchors it for the winter months ahead.

Weeding is another job that can be done in late summer. The lawn looks cleaner and without the competition of weeds the old grass will have a better chance to thrive. The new grass will get a stronger start.

Weed, Feed, Seed

The three major steps in the fall lawn program are usually executed in this order—Weed, Feed and Seed.

There is no reason, however, why this order need be adhered to, if some other sequence is more convenient. Turf Builder can be applied any time before or after the weed treatment, and either before or just after seeding. It is better if seeding is done some time after weeding, though both can be accomplished the same day.

By the end of summer, lawns are likely to be infested with either or both types of weeds: (1) the grass-like type such as Crabgrass, and (2) the broad-leaf type like Buckhorn, Plantain and Dandelion.

Weeds of the Crabgrass type are difficult to control because there is no satisfactory chemical that will kill them

without killing the desirable lawn grasses. However, they can definitely be eliminated by persistent, properly timed cultural control methods as described in LAWN CARE No. 70. In brief, the process is to cross-rake and cross-mow, at the same time catching and removing the clippings.

Broadleaved weeds which used to require day after day of back breaking labor with a spudding knife are now a pushover. They can be sprayed away with Scotts 4-X. Very little time is required and no fuss or muss. The desirable grasses are not even discolored.

Almost everyone recognizes Buckhorn, a common occupant of lawns at this time of year. It is the rosette forming weed which sends up a single tall stem bearing the seed head. The mower merely pushes these stems over and they snap back up without ever getting caught in the mower reel.

Other weeds prominent this year are Plantain, a broad leaved cousin of Buckhorn, Yellow Trefoil, which has a leaf like clover but a small yellow blossom, and Purslane, a fleshy, creeping annual.

All of these weeds and many others disappear in two or three weeks' time if treated with Scotts 4-X. Spraying is better than using a sprinkling can because it delivers a finer spray so the solution stays on the foliage. Where weeds are not thick enough to require spraying the whole lawn, they can be quickly spot treated by using Scotts 4-X in a little hand spray, like a flit gun.

Weeds can be sprayed any time they are growing, right up to freezing weather. Nevertheless, "the sooner the better" applies here just as it does with most early fall lawn work.

Good Food Brings Good Color

Feeding a lawn in the fall accomplishes at least two things that make it very much worthwhile. It brings



back the bright green color that makes healthy lawns such a pleasant sight in the spring. It also replaces much of the grass food which has been drained out of the soil by the growth of weeds, by tree roots, and by the many grass mowings all summer long.

A good lawn has to have lots of nourishment if it is to remain good. A poor lawn needs feeding before there is any hope of improvement. In shaded areas where grass has to compete with the millions of hairlike tree roots, feeding takes on added importance. Not only must a supply be provided for the tree but also for the grass. For information on tree feeding, see **LAWN CARE**.

Any effective grassfood may burn if enough of it sticks to the foliage. Therefore, it is advisable to make application when the grass is dry. In the fall when dews are heavy, grass may not dry out sufficiently until afternoon.

Don't Waste Seed

The third step in the fall program is seeding. For many people, this is the only step practiced but seeding without weeding and feeding is wasteful.

Wasteful also is the practice of sowing seed more heavily than needed. This is no year to be careless with seed. Even on bare ground, five or six pounds per thousand square feet is ample for it provides about seventy seeds on each square inch of ground. Sowing seed too heavily may crowd the plants and certainly it encourages fungus disease. Many new plantings made last spring were severely damaged by fungus, encouraged by too heavy seeding and excess moisture. Those plantings should be repaired this fall instead of waiting until next spring.



If the ground is dry, new seed will lie dormant for many weeks without injury and sprout whenever enough moisture develops. If germination is hastened by sprinkling, the ground must not be allowed to dry out before the grass is well rooted. Otherwise, some of the seedlings will succumb as they have only shallow roots which cannot reach out very far for moisture.

Where new grass is sown to thicken up a lawn, the old grass must be kept mowed in order not to smother the young grass coming up through it. This requires care in mowing, particularly at the turns, in order not to disturb the seedling plants.

Shaded Lawns

This is, by far, the best time of all the year to take inventory of tree shaded lawns and plan to improve them.

One reason why shaded lawns thin out in summer is that the turf does not have a sturdy root system. The main effect of shade is to reduce root growth so it is important to give the grass every chance to develop rootwise, when the shade is not so dense. New seedlings will have that opportunity as the trees lose their leaves this fall and before they leaf out next spring.

Leaves should be removed from lawns. If allowed to mat they will smother the grass and make pock marks in the lawn.

Unless the ground is very soft, it is not harmful to walk on young grass in order to sweep up the leaves. One of the light-weight bamboo, steel or new aluminum broom rakes will not damage tender plants if used with a reasonable degree of care.

Since seeds respire, they will not germinate unless they have a sufficient supply of oxygen. If buried too deeply, they do not get needed air.

Blame Leaf Spot

Many lawns suffered this spring from a disease known as leaf spot. (LAWN CARE No. 41.) Like an epidemic of measles, it descended upon lawns to a much greater extent than is customary. Folks thought that whatever they had been doing to their lawns just before the Leaf Spot attacks had caused the damage. They suspected over-feeding, over-watering, or perhaps the spraying for weed control. Leaf Spot was in most instances the culprit.

This disease kills grass right down to the roots. It doesn't often take whole lawns, usually it attacks limited areas of poor drainage or other unfavorable conditions. Here is what to do if the same trouble drops in next year: (1) mow your lawn high, or not at all until the disease has subsided; (2) fertilize; (3) water to hasten fertilizing action; (4) hope for the best.

SEED SHORTAGE

(Continued from page 1.)

years, many new factory lawns were seeded, thousands of acres of turf were required by the Government at military camps and on the country's new airfields. This exhausted all reserve supplies of seed.

With consumption going up and production going down, the crop failure this year sent market prices to an all-time high. Therefore, sharp price advances are a necessity this fall if quality is to be maintained.

There may be enough curtailed buying to make the short crop go around. So if you need seed, don't hesitate to buy it but don't waste it by sowing on poorly prepared ground or without adequate plant food.

Sirs:

I read in Lawn Care about covering Crabgrass for a week to ten days, but my area was 65 feet wide and 75 feet long in one solid growth with smaller patches over another 4,000 square feet. I bought several rolls of slater's felt and covered the large area, holding the felt down with stones and boards. On the twelfth day, I found Crabgrass about like dry hay. I removed covering and watered, lawn grass came back in a short time but no visible Crabgrass. Last year at Crabgrass time, I worked over my lawn carefully and in the entire season I hand picked a little over a half peck of Crabgrass seedlings. My lawn now has such vigorous growth that I hope to harvest little Crabgrass this year.

Very truly yours,
A. L. HUDSON.

Hudson, Ohio

Sirs:

My lawn had been badly infested for years with Plantain and hand digging proved impossible. After reading No. 88 Lawn Care I decided to try your new weed spray. Within 48 hours Plantain of all sizes and by the thousands began to curl and look sick and now, after a month, they have completely disappeared.

I am more than pleased and think you have a wonderful weed control as it also killed Poison Ivy.

LAWRENCE W. WHITE

157 School Street
Milton, Mass.

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