

Lawn Care

T.M. REG

PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES YEARLY FOR LAWNTHUSIASTS

FALL IS BEST FIX-UP TIME

FALL offers natural grass growing advantages in practically all sections of the country. Whether it's Minnesota or Georgia, Maine or California, the season after Labor Day brings shorter days, cooler nights, heavier dews and favorable rains. At the same time the soil is warm and there is enough good sunshine and moisture to germinate new seeds and nurture them into deep-rooting plants.

On the West Coast, the months of September through December precede a period of usually desirable rains. Nature co-operates to the fullest in trying to make every seed produce a vigorous plant.

Those who work in the flower gar-

den know that early fall is the time to sow perennials. The young plants grow slowly but sturdily in the cooler weather, developing a good root structure with only limited topgrowth. So it is with the better varieties of grass which are perennial.

In the more severe climates, winter may be hard on growing things, but plants are endowed by Nature to fortify themselves against cold by building up food reserves in preparation for dormancy.

The accompanying illustration shows that seed is safely sown in the latitude of central Ohio even as late as December. Such results are not limited to Ohio. Many state experiment stations



October, November and December seedings have all given good results as these SCOTTS Test Plot pictures show. Seeds in upper plots did not germinate until Spring, 1948, but produced excellent stands well before summer.

report the same results, as have home owners and landscape contractors. Year old plots are pictured and these bear out similar observations over a period of 25 years.

In practical application, it is sometimes impossible to sow new lawns as late as December because the soil is not in condition to be worked. The test plots pictured had been prepared earlier in the season and the seed was simply scattered over the area in early December without raking or covering. The real point is that it is all right to go ahead with seeding whenever the soil is ready.

New Lawns or Old

Experienced builders of new lawns are well aware of the many advantages of fall planting. Supervisors of large turf areas such as school campuses, city parks, golf courses and cemeteries, likewise protect their sizeable lawn investments by planting in the fall. New home owners will do well to take a tip from them.

Emphasis should not be placed entirely on new lawns, however. This is also the best time to repair lawns already planted. It requires only a few pounds and a few minutes to overseed old lawns, yet such an overseeding once or twice a year will greatly improve turf that has been thinned out from summer heat and insects and diseases as well as lack of moisture. It will increase the lawn's resistance to weeds and is by far an easier job than completely renovating or rebuilding a lawn that was allowed to run down and get weedy.

Time to Fight Bermuda Grass

In localities of mild climate where Bermuda Grass is a persistent pest, fall is a strategic season to gain the offensive. Bermuda begins to lose its aggressiveness then and often goes into dormancy. It turns an ugly brown and

can be readily distinguished. Home owners who never suspected it was getting started in their lawns can spot it when it loses color and attack it while it is still a minor problem.

Infested areas should be vigorously renovated and desirable grass started while Bermuda is weak and non-competitive. Then when the Devil Grass starts activity again the following spring, it wakes up to find strong opposition from a well established turf that has been thickening up all winter long.

Other Lawn Work, Too

The fall months of the year call for other lawn work in addition to seeding. It is a good time to get rid of broad-leaved weeds. Some varieties are more vulnerable in the fall than at any other time. Moreover, after the weed control gets in its licks, there is opportunity to sow seed and start new grass in spots left by departed weeds.

Fall feeding is important. Slow rains soak nutrient materials into the ground, nourishing roots to deeper growth and building up winter reserves.

Late Fall Maintenance Hints

Where leaves are a problem, mow the grass shorter than has been the practice during hot summer months. It makes it easier to rake or sweep off the leaves. With the return of hot weather in the spring, the mower should again be adjusted for high cutting.

Leaves ought to be removed frequently, especially from new seedings, and from the softer grass growing under trees. If not, rains may mat them so they smother the grass.

Some varieties of trees shed leaves all winter. These leaves create a special problem if they are flattened against the ground and then freeze. Grass plants underneath are sure to succumb.

It is well to continue mowing any lawn as long as the grass continues growing.

Fall or winter is a good time to apply lime, if needed, and for applications of grub controls, if such difficulty is anticipated.

Spreaders Are Handy

Anyone with a lawn to build or maintain should consider adding a mechanical spreader to his equipment.

These two-wheeled carts are available in such precision construction that they can be used not only for distributing lawn food or lime, but also for sowing seed. A simple adjustment regulates the rate of flow and application is more uniform than even an expert can achieve by hand-broadcasting. They eliminate the dangers and waste of over-application. Their cost is small and a good one will last for many years.

Oxalis Problem Still Unsolved

Last month LAWN CARE printed a small illustration of Oxalis, a lawn weed that ranks along with Crabgrass and Bermuda Grass as a lawn weed of annoying tenacity. If you have successfully eliminated or even controlled it in your lawn, other LAWN CARE readers will appreciate knowing how.

"About the second season of my lawn, it developed or got infested with a small amount of Oxalis or Sour Grass. I was unable to contact anybody who could enlighten me on removal of this weed.

"One of the newspapers printed an answer to this query. Scatter about 3 pounds of lime to 10 x 10 foot square. It would slowly drive Oxalis out. I tried this remedy about six months and used over 60 pounds of hydrated lime. It proved futile. This lawn is now heavily infested and I have to mow this area frequently to keep it from flowering and seeding.

"Another person stated there was no remedy and the best thing to do was to use Diesel oil on the lawn, destroying all vegetation.

Then recondition the soil and plant a new lawn.

"Someone else stated Oxalis had been killed by spraying with a solution of Ammonium Sulphate, using one pound to a gallon of water. I haven't experimented with this yet.

"The weed is readily detected when the dew is on the lawn in early morning. I put a small wood stake marker on these spots. When the lawn is dry I start operating. The leaves and stems are very tender and break off easily. I trace the stems back to the lateral to which the weed is attached. This lateral has a pinkish color. They run from an inch to possibly 10 inches according to the time they have been developing from seed. This also has to do with the number of laterals from the root, which at times are quite numerous."—San Diego, California.

"In Scotts LAWN CARE, I noticed an item, 'How Do You Fight This Lawn Weed?' Oxalis is then described. I have a four acre place with an acre or more of lawn and flower beds. This lawn has not yet been attacked, but almost every flower bed we have has within the last two years been infested with Oxalis and it is increasing so rapidly that we have found only one way to even attempt to eradicate it and that is by spading or troweling and sifting out by hand the upturned soil to get out and destroy the small bulbs of the plants.

"If through any replies to the article in LAWN CARE you are informed of anything that will destroy this weed, I shall appreciate it very much if you will let me know."—Atherton, California.

"My two pet Muscovy ducks completely eliminated Oxalis. They also control snails, slugs, pill bugs and many other pests. There are very few of some 200 varieties of desired plants in the yard which they harm."—Glendale, Calif.

This weed is resistant to the new weed controls but perhaps some of you have tried other chemicals or worked out successful mechanical methods. As a sort of clearing house for lawn information, SCOTTS will welcome your experiences. Just write to Scotts Lawn Care, Palo Alto, California.

"I have seen one of your bulletins on LAWN CARE and think it is very good. I have lowered the roller on my mower and the lawn looks better already."—Salt Lake City, Utah.

RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS IN AGRICULTURE

No Split Atoms for Lawns—Yet

The Atomic Energy Commission and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are studying the effect of radioactive materials on growth of plants. Experiments previously conducted in Europe and America have been conflicting and inconclusive.

Reports of exceptionally good crops near Nagasaki have stimulated interest in the problem. Investigations by qualified scientists, however, failed to reveal a basis for the claim that radiation from the atomic bomb benefited crops.

Even if there is some indication of improved crop growth, the problem of effect on seed germination will require serious study, to mention just one of the accompanying problems.

SIRS:

I am purchasing a new home under construction. According to the contract the lawn is to be done by the builder.

But I plan to buy the seed for it is understood that many contractors use only the cheapest grass seed that can only provide a troublesome lawn in the long run.

By furnishing him with good quality Scotts Seed at this time, I feel confident I will be well rewarded with a permanent lawn around my new home for the small additional expense involved.

ROBERT J. BROWN

Valley Stream, L. I.

"Just a line to tell you our experience with your Lawn Food plus Weed Control was all and more than we expected. To my mind this is a distinct achievement in a weed-killer. We ordered a second drum to treat an additional plot of ground badly infested with weeds."—Marysville, Washington.

SCOTTS LAWN CARE

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digest and the separate issues of recent publication.

The same bulletins are available in a paper bound file at twenty-five cents.

"I am sure glad we used your grass seed on our front and back yard and dense shade seed at the side of the house. We have a gorgeous green, beautiful lawn. A real 1948 new look. We learn a great deal in LAWN CARE."—Los Angeles, California.

What Have You Done About Crabgrass?

The wet, late spring in many sections has made Crabgrass grow more vigorously than ever. It is still difficult of control but basically all that is needed is to keep it from seeding.

The editors of LAWN CARE would like to hear of new experiences in Crabgrass Control, particularly from those who may have tried chemical treatment. Of particular interest will be time and number of treatments, ease of application, results as measured by effect on desirable grasses as well as Crabgrass.

O M SCOTT & SONS CO.



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