

# Lawn Care

PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES YEARLY FOR LAWNTHUSIASTS

## LAWN OUTLOOK FOR '48 PROMISING

THE prediction of good lawns for 1948 is based upon two favorable circumstances. The first is substantially lower prices in top quality seed. It is most refreshing that costs in at least one department around home will be down. One contributing factor to this decline is the abundant crop of seed produced in 1947. Moisture supply was ample, temperatures favorable, and curing weather was just as experts like it. The result was a large production of fine quality seed. Translated into the home maker's budget this adds up to a better lawn this year at lesser cost.

The other favorable factor is attributed to the sub-zero temperatures experienced this past winter in most localities where *LAWN CARE* is read. While this extreme cold may have killed some young and tender grass plants, the deep freezing has been a real blessing to soils.

The force developed by freezing water is equivalent to 150 tons to the square foot. The lower the temperature, the deeper the freezing and the process of expansion and later contraction. Such action helps open up com-

pacted soils, making them more friable. It creates tiny crevices through the soil, which permits better penetration of moisture and enables grass roots to work their way to greater depths.

Man's feeble efforts to break up or loosen the soil are trivial by comparison with the natural forces during a severe winter.

Low soil temperatures also serve to kill many insect pests that might otherwise live in hibernation over the winter to attack grass plants in warmer seasons. In addition, fungi, molds and other harmful spores are held in check by long periods of zero weather.

Some grass may be winterkilled because it is not well anchored or because it is in low

spots of poor surface drainage where water from melting snow collects and is subject to severe heaving action during periods of alternate freezing and thawing. Winterkill may occur when grass goes into winter without sufficient moisture around roots as happened in some localities last fall.

Nevertheless, the net result of the extremely cold winter should be favor-



able to grass and give an added incentive to the lawn enthusiast to cash in on the bright outlook. It behooves the home owner to take advantage of Nature's aid and co-operate by following the right program for his lawn this spring.

**The first order of business is feeding.** Do it any time, even on light snow. Broadcast lawn food by hand or better still with a spreader. When the grass is brown and dormant, no need to be concerned whether the vegetation is wet or dry. If feeding is delayed until grass is green, then apply only when blades are dry.

**Is lime required?** Unless the lawn is located in native limestone country, it is apt to need lime every three or four years. In case of doubt, the degree of acidity can be determined by soil pH tests, as suggested in earlier issues of LAWN CARE.

If lime is to be used, late winter or early spring is an excellent time for application. Freezing and thawing will help carry it into the ground.

Hydrated lime can be used, but raw limestone, finely ground, is better for lawn treatments. A typical dosage of raw limestone, also known as pulverized agricultural limestone, is 50 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Unless especially fine and fluffy, it can be applied with a Scott-type spreader.

Another possible early spring lawn job is the application of a pest control to **destroy grubs of Jap beetles**. The 1947 brood of beetles was quite heavy and the grubs that were hatched last fall from eggs laid in summer may chew grass roots as the soil warms. The sooner a preventive pest control is applied, the better. See page 3.

**Follow with seeding as necessary.** A general overall seeding may be needed or only spot seeding here and there. Sow grass seed immediately after

feeding, liming or using pest control, if desired. Get seed in the ground as early as possible. Very cold weather, even heavy snows, will not harm good lawn seed. Earlier seedings get a head start over summer heat and drouth.

Some time in the spring program it is advisable to **rake out the lawn** to remove leaves, sticks and dead patches. It is all right before or after seeding so long as there is no danger of pulling out sprouting grass. A sharp-toothed iron rake is usually recommended.

If convenient it's all right to **roll—don't overdo it**. Wait until frost is out of the ground. Use a water-ballast roller just heavy enough to firm the roots and crowns into the soil. That is all rolling should do. Much harm is done to the soil if the roller is used to attempt leveling of high and low spots. That should be done with topdressing.

**Start mowing** as soon as the grass makes any noticeable spring growth. Don't wait until it gets really tall because rain may delay mowing and the later growth may make a hayfield out of the lawn. It is not good to let the grass get six or eight inches high before cutting. It is then hard to do a neat job and many grass blades are chewed off instead of cleanly cut.

Mowing height during cool weather may be fairly short, especially if young grass is developing. Cutting at an inch or so prevents smothering and the height can be raised as it gets hot. Catch or rake the clippings and use as mulch for garden or shrubs.

Dandelions, plantain and other broad-leaved weeds are easily eliminated as they become conspicuous. Two methods are open. One is to spray them away. The other is to apply the new dry compound that clears out the weeds and feeds the grass in one operation.

If the spray method is used, the regular three gallon garden type pressure

sprayer is recommended. The contents of the convenient pre-measured packets can be emptied right into the tank, add the required water, pump up the pressure, and spray. Go after the weeds any time they are in active growth.

The dry combination is applied with a spreader. Results may at times be somewhat slower but they are just as sure and there are distinct advantages in the ease of application and the stimulation of the grass to thicker, more beautiful growth.

Use weed control almost any time except during or immediately after hot, sultry wet weather. New grass should be a couple of months along or well past the fine seedling stage.

## JAP BEETLES INCREASE IN '47

LAWN CARE readers in the eastern states reported an increase in Jap beetle activity last year. Damage to their roses, shrubs and small fruit trees was greater than for many years. There was a proportionate increase of grubs in lawn soils. This showed up to some extent in lawn injury last fall, but the brunt of their lawn operations will be apparent this spring.

The main concentration of Jap beetles is along the Atlantic Seaboard from southern Maine to Norfolk. Inland it extends fairly well through Massachusetts, eastern New York and Pennsylvania, and throughout New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland.

Isolated infestations occur around Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Indianapolis and St. Louis. City authorities of Detroit have set aside a substantial appropriation for Jap beetle control to combat what was described as the worst outbreak in 15 years.

Those living outside the Jap beetle infestation zone can hardly visualize

the extent of damage by the beetles. A horde of these pests will descend upon a bush or tree, quickly stripping all leafy vegetation and fruit, leaving only the skeleton of the leaf structure and the stone of fruit such as peaches and cherries.

During the summer, beetles lay eggs in the soil to continue their life cycle. In early fall these hatch into grubs which feed on grass roots for a while, dig deep for winter, return to the surface as the ground warms in the spring. Again they chew on grass roots until they become fully grown to emerge as adult beetles in May or June.

It is difficult to destroy adult beetles in appreciable quantities. They are most vulnerable to attack while still grubs in the soil. Destroying a grub eliminates it and its potential progeny as pests. It also reduces lawn damage which results when large colonies feed on the grass roots.

For a long time the only control for grubs was Lead Arsenate. Many who objected to using this poison on their lawns will be glad to know that new and better chemicals are now available. For convenience these are combined in Scotts Pest Control, easily applied and inexpensive. Other suitable commercial products are also expected on the market.

### SIRS:

I received the LAWN CARE binder. Thanks. I read the bulletins and many times pass them on to friends, but now will retain them for reference. In a recent number you had an enlightening article entitled "Pay Dirt." We have had an epidemic of the "smart boys" but to my knowledge they fooled only one person and that was a woman. They used the same procedure as mentioned in your column (LAWN CARE 97) and the cost was about \$60.00, and the next season they got an abundant crop of weeds.

THOMAS DAWSON

Langhorne, Penna.

We know of a banker who got taken in—and how!—Ed.

SIRS:

One of the black-dirt bandit crews worked this area the other day but my lawn and pocketbook were protected in my absence by one of the family who had read **LAWN CARE**. Thanks.

I am really sorry that I was not here when they arrived, because it would have been fun to check up with your set of specifications on how they work. Unfortunately it was a Sunday, as specified, and I was out at the golf club. My wife talked with the doorbell pusher, and his sales efforts sounded loud enough to attract the attention of our 16-year-old daughter upstairs. Quite unknown to me, it develops that she is one of your more devoted readers; don't ask me why, but she had that particular copy of **LAWN CARE** stashed away in her room. So, by the time my wife had shooed the peddler away by saying she could do nothing about the lawn because that is in my department on the family organization chart, Marcia came downstairs with your house organ and read the piece aloud.

Then they sauntered outdoors and watched the boys work out on the neighbors exactly as prophesied by your helpful warning, even to having the head man take the customer around in back to look over that section of the lawn while his accomplices threw dirt around the front lawn.

Driving home, I saw—and recognized—what had hit the area from the stuff that had been thrown on the lawns of a few folks who apparently do not receive—or read—**LAWN CARE**. It was Skokie muck, Skokie being the swamp which parallels the sub-continental divide separating the run-off into Lake Michigan and thence to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and into the Desplaines River, thence into larger tributaries of the Mississippi and into the Gulf of Mexico. Skokie muck looks like coal dust, and has about as much nourishment, except for those coarse weeds that thrive in it.

ARTHUR VAN VLISSINGEN

October 21, 1947  
Lake Bluff, Illinois

Sirs:

Two years ago this October I purchased residential property in a beautiful section of Bethesda, Maryland. From the standpoint of

appearance at that time, the property was the neighborhood scapegoat. The former occupants had spread gravel and ashes for use as sidewalks. The lawn was completely bare of vegetation and there was no shrubbery. There were, however, five beautiful oak trees and five very pretty gum trees.

At the age of fifty-eight I require some daily exercise to keep me in trim for my official duties. This I have found in the building of a lawn. Despite the discouraging comments of my neighbors in the beginning, at the end of two years I have a fairly good lawn—even up to the trunks of the oak trees. I attribute a large portion of my success in this venture to the use of **SCOTTS** products—seed, weed control, fertilizer, spreaders, etc. I enjoy reading your "**LAWN CARE**" but I am surprised that in no issue have I found any suggestions from you for destroying grubs of Japanese beetles. This fall I have found many of them a half to three-quarters of an inch under the sod.

J. H. PENCE.

Washington, D. C.

See **LAWN CARE** 44 or the new Digest, Chapter 11.—Ed.

## New Binder Available

**LAWN CARE** has been published continuously since 1928. The data in the older issues has been brought up-to-date and condensed into a twelve chapter digest.

This can be had in a sturdy loose leaf ring binder at one dollar, post-paid, including the complete digest and the separate issues of recent publication.



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

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