

# Lawn Care

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PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES YEARLY FOR LAWNTHUSIASTS

## REVIVE WINTER BLASTED LAWNS

**E**VERYWHERE that grass is found there also exist great extremes of soils and climate. Very few plants are called upon to meet such a wide range of conditions and uses. One cannot help marveling at the adaptability of this foremost of ground covers; yet grass is not entirely independent of its environment.

It is impossible to define a normal year for grass, but to say it has just gone through an unusual winter is no overstatement. Snow fell in areas where it hasn't been seen for years, but worst damage was caused by the succession of frosts that piled up their punches with telling effect.

Citrus growers counted the damage in millions. Added to this was the unestimated damage to gardens of all kinds. Homeowners received their share as each day saw their gardens turn browner and browner.

**Even Weeds Shocked.** Damage to all vegetation was severe and grass did not escape. Even weeds turned purple and curled up as if to absorb their own warmth in a cold bed.

Many lawns, especially those in exposed areas, affected a state of self-protecting dormancy and lost their greenness as natural processes were suspended. Evidence was graphic. Under low trees or large shrubs grass remained greener because frost descended on the protecting trees and left the grass relatively untouched. As one lady observed, "That green area

under the tree is the only spot in our whole lawn that is not white with frost in the mornings."

Unfortunately some lawns were walked over when the grass was frosted and brittle. This will leave off-color footprints for several weeks.

**Fungus Also Guilty.** To make matters worse, fungus became active. To the uninitiated, fungus is associated with hot, humid weather. But there are a few types that go to work only at temperatures around freezing or slightly below, especially if moisture is also present. This fungus is often the reason for lawns turning brown.

While gardens may not fare so well, the damage to lawns is largely temporary. Except in severe attacks, fungus cripples only the top growth, leaving the roots strong enough to survive. Cold weather browning of turf is likewise a setback usually affecting only the tops. Lawns planted with perennial grasses can be expected to recover, if given a helping hand.

**What to Do.** It requires only a reasonable amount of pleasant and healthful yard activity to bring your winter blasted lawn out of its coma.

The steps recommended are ones that pay a bonus in beauty on any lawn whether damaged by winter or not. LAWN CARE tries to remind its readers of these beauty treatments each year for they have a vigorous nod of approval from those who have followed them regularly.

**Feed, Feed, Feed.** Grass responds to early feeding. Breakfast in bed is good for the lawn. Feeding can be accomplished almost any time, even on top of a light snow. Put the food there while grass is still dormant. The right food will not readily leach from the soil.

Providing ample nourishment as early as possible is a must on lawns that were winter frosted. It is a big aid to speedy recuperation. It supplies to grass the wherewithall for healing its own wounds. After all, no starving plant has the reserve to put out new growth nor take on the green glow of health.

Light but frequent applications of a complete lawn food are more healthful than just an occasional heavy feeding. Steady, evenly available nutrition is the secret of steady, even grass growth.

**Lime for Lawns.** Lime deficiencies are responsible for many lawn failures blamed on other causes. Sometimes grass does not respond to feeding or even watering because of lack of lime. Weed control applications may not work if the soil is extremely acid. Fungus disease and insect injury are more severe in acid soils because grass root systems are usually shallow.

Over a large portion of the western land area, soils are neutral or even alkaline and no lime is needed. These are usually the areas of low rainfall or where irrigation water is high in lime.

In other portions, however, such as the Pacific Northwest, applications of lime are beneficial. In the Puget Sound area and extending southward through part of Oregon the soils are definitely acid in reaction and need the corrective measure of liming.

Lime can be applied any time. Winter or early spring are good because the weather helps to carry it into the soil.

This is one job that can be done early, ahead of other outside activities.

It is best to learn from soil analysis whether or not lime is required. In the absence of such information, and unless some has been added within the year, it will do no harm to apply agricultural lime at 25 to 50 pounds per thousand square feet. Large lawns may be test-treated in a small area and results observed during the season. This will serve to determine whether or not the whole lawn should be limed.

**Seeding.** Sowing of grass seed can be done earlier than many realize and there are advantages not to be overlooked. Cold weather does not harm seed. Freezing and thawing open tiny cracks in the soil in which the seed will lodge. Germination will take place later as Mother Nature warms the soil.

Weeds don't wait for hot weather. This was clearly demonstrated by patches of green showing up in winter browned lawns. These were weeds awakening ahead of everything else.

Weak spots in lawns, not reinforced with new grass, are ideal starting places for weeds that may spread to infest the whole lawn. In the southwest early seeding gives the desirable grass a head start over Bermuda (devil grass).

Always, the lawn practitioner must look ahead. Summer, like winter, presents its problems. Drouth and high temperatures and insects will take their toll. But they can be easily and successfully combated by alertness.

**Fix Up Tools.** Late winter is a good time to check on the supply and condition of the lawn tools. A heavy garden rake is handy in lawn work, also a steel or bamboo broom rake. A good spreader for seeding, fertilizing and weed control applications is a great time saver. It should be kept clean and well oiled.

In buying a new spreader look for these important features: (1) finger tip control of rate and open-shut, near the top of the handle, (2) positive shut-off, (3) precision adjustment and guaranteed flow at light rates such as two pounds of grass seed per thousand square feet. This is particularly important when seed prices are high.

"I have never written a company endorsing their product but we've had such pleasant results from your product that it moves me to drop you a line. We have used your lawn food with and without weed killer and everyone is asking us what we did to our lawn, for it is green and much thicker. The results were miraculous. I know you'll have several new customers just from the appearance of our lawn after using Scotts."—Portland, Oregon.

## Special Purpose Blend Replaces Dense Shade

LAWN CARE readers who are users of Scotts Seed will find a change in the line this year.

Instead of Scotts for Dense Shade, a new Special Purpose Blend is now offered. This has been formulated to take care of numerous lawn situations posing some sort of problem. For example, it is the seed to sow under trees where sunlight does not penetrate for at least half a day.

Folks living west of the Cascades in Washington and Oregon will find it well adapted to either sunny or shady lawn areas in acid soils. Along the coast of California where soils are sandy and evaporation rapid, this blend will prove more drought resistant and tenacious, as it will also in the interior valley. Still another good place for its use is in back yards and play areas receiving considerable hard wear.

This special combination makes turf a bit different in texture. It is at home in the full sun but where growing conditions are reasonably good, we recommend Scotts Lawn Seed as producing the most attractive turf.

## Short Seed Crops Send Prices Higher

IN LAWN CARE No. 98-PS, the reader was taken behind the scenes and told about the sources of grass seed. He learned how seed was grown, and that it is harvested in various limited areas. Principal seed producing zones in the United States include Kentucky and Illinois, the Great Plains States and the Pacific Northwest, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The British Isles and Continent, important sources for this country prior to 1939, are gradually getting back into the market.

It is peculiar that while grass is universal, most varieties set seed in commercial quantities in only limited areas. The world production of one of the most important grasses is actually confined to a few countries.

While most seed reaches the market after rough refining in the production areas, small amounts find their way to special seed cleaning mills where harmful weeds and most chaff are removed.

Not much grass seed is produced as a cultivated crop. There is little chance to further Nature's efforts by soil preparation, cultivation or other techniques. The crop is volunteer and yields depend on weather conditions in the fall, winter and spring preceding harvest.

Last summer an excellent crop was forecast for one of the important grasses. Growers were optimistic because of new combining machinery with which they expected to harvest the crop in spite of labor shortages. Then came the deluge. A July storm spilled 3 inches of rainfall in 48 hours. The dead-ripe seed was shattered so badly that only 15 percent of the crop could be saved. The market price tripled, yet the grower received a poor acreage return.

In another section drouth hit just at the critical time. A plague of grasshoppers and fungus disease cut Pacific Northwest harvests.

Some of the cheaper and coarse varieties such as Annual Ryegrass turned out fairly well. They will be used in large quantities to help reduce the price of certain lawn seed. Such mixtures make a wonderful early showing but they simply cannot produce a permanent lawn.

### Good Quality is Economy

In spite of all the things that happened to grass seed harvests last year, the consumer will still get greater value if he selects the highest quality. At best, one seed produces one seedling. A pound of the smaller seeds like Kentucky Bluegrass (which has been Scott cleaned to remove chaff and weed seeds) will contain over 2,000,000 potential grass plants. The Bentgrass count is over eight million per pound, while coarse, cheap annual grasses total less than 250,000.

Since a carpet of live grass plants is the goal of every seeding, it will take ten pounds or more of the coarse varieties to grow the number of plants expected from three or four pounds of the smaller seeds. But in spite of the heavier seeding, the kind of grass one wants is not forthcoming.

Simple arithmetic demonstrates the economy of good seed. You sow less of it. Then there are the plus features of sowing clean seed instead of weeds, wasteful chaff and plain dirt.

"We used your lawn seed (my first time with this mixture). It's well up now and I have never had a better stand of grass in the 20 years I have been making lawns."—Montesano, Washington.

## Issue 103, 22nd Year

Many changes in lawn maintenance have evolved since the first issue of LAWN CARE in August, 1928. In order to keep pace with things new, earlier issues have been revised and condensed into digest form of twelve chapters:

1. PLANNING THE LAWN.
2. LAWN SOILS.
3. ROUGH GRADING AND DRAINAGE.
4. FINAL GRADING AND SEEDING.
5. PROPER LAWN MOWING.
6. WATERING LAWNS.
7. PROPER FEEDING, RESEEDING.
8. CHEMICAL WEED CONTROLS.
9. GRASS-TYPE LAWN WEEDS.
10. SUMMER LAWN INJURY.
11. CONTROL, GRUBS, MOLES, ANTS.
12. LAWN RENOVATION.

In addition articles of lasting interest in recent separate issues include:

- No. 93. SOLVING SHADE PROBLEM.  
 No. 94. WEED-FEED SIMULTANEOUSLY.  
 No. 97. HUMUS FERTILIZER RACKET.  
 No. 98 PS. ORIGIN OF LAWN SEED.  
 No. 99 PS. WESTERN LAWN PROGRAM.  
 No. 101 PS. WHERE WEEDS COME FROM.

### Full Sets Available

All digest chapters and the more important recent issues are available in convenient permanent form. The complete set in a sturdy loose-leaf ring binder, with room for many additional issues, is one dollar, postpaid. The digests and current issues in a heavy paper cover is twenty-five cents, postpaid.



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