

Lawn Care

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KEEP YOUR LAWN PEST-FREE

IF the myriads of insects that plague the flower and vegetable garden were also found in lawns, the gardener would indeed be a busy and frustrated person.

Most insects don't seem to have much appetite for turf and the few that do are easily controlled.

There are some beetles and moths which prefer to lay their eggs in the thick, moist sod of a well tended lawn. While the egg laying adults do not in themselves harm grass, their larvae, hatching from the eggs, feed on grass plants and injure lawns.

This injury makes the lawn look as though it were suffering from lack of moisture. It occurs mostly in the summer months so that is the time to watch for symptoms of insects.

There is a lag between the feeding activity of the larvae and the browning of the lawn because grass can withstand the shock for a while before losing color. The healthier the grass, the longer will be this lag. Then the damage may show up at about the same time an application of fertilizer or weed control is made and the conclusion is wrongly reached that the treatment instead of the insects caused the browning of the grass.

Some larvae are fondly regarded by birds. A large number of feathered friends on a lawn is one indication of the presence of insects in harmful numbers. Birds do not appear in such num-

bers to eat newly sown grass seed as is sometimes believed.

Another indication is the activity of moles, skunks and raccoon. These animals are carnivorous and relish particularly the fat, white grubs of beetles which live below the surface of the lawn. For example, while the grubs feed on grass roots, moles feed on the grubs. Killing the moles without killing the grubs leaves the door open for the entry of more moles. On the other hand, the simple expedient of killing the grubs will nearly always drive the moles away.

Lawn Moths. One of the most common insects in the West is the Sod Webworm. This is the larva that hatches from the egg of the Lawn Moth. Because the webworms are seldom seen and the adult form or moths are very evident, it is the latter that are mistakenly assumed as causing the damage in lawns.



Sod Webworms feed at the base of grass plants. They have big appetites.

Lawn Moths are tan in color and measure about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from wing tip to wing tip. Their zig-zag, short distance flights close to the ground are a common sight on summer evenings at dusk. These are the species *Crambus*, busily laying eggs in the lawn. Like other moths they are night fliers, but sprinkling or mowing the lawn will flush them into flight in daylight. Any great number is a clear warning to broadcast pest control over the lawn to prevent brown patches before they happen.

Some webworm larvae bore into the grass stems or root bases. Others construct silken tunnels between the stems of grasses and feed upon the leaves.

Skippers. There is a small butterfly called the Skipper whose activities are similar to the Lawn Moth and whose larvae also feed on grass. The adult is slightly larger than the Lawn Moth, having about one inch wingspread, orange in color and mottled with dark brown spots. Skippers indulge in daylight flights that are short, jerky and at low level. They literally skip about the lawn.

Like Lawn Moths they range from Canada southward to cover all the western states. Skippers feed on wild or cultivated grasses, Bermuda Grass and Clover. After satisfying their appetites, the larvae make a rolled tube of grass from which they later emerge as the winged insects.

Grubs. Fortunately, the western states have so far escaped the Japanese Beetle grubs, so destructive in the East. However, white grubs which are the larvae of other Scarab beetles, most commonly the May or June beetle, are frequent enough to require attention.

These larvae feed on grass roots just below the surface, cutting off the plants' intake of food and moisture. Eventually the grass turns brown in patches because the grubs feed in colonies.

Since the roots are chewed off the turf can be lifted up like a carpet, exposing the white grubs, curled like shrimp, and if full grown, measuring about an inch in length. To kill them requires getting the control material down into the soil at the level where they are feeding. When treatment is made to the surface of the lawn, time is required for it to work down.

The control material is sometimes incorporated into the seed bed to grub-proof a new lawn. The same treatment will temporarily proof the new lawn against mole crickets.

Minor Pests Harming Turf

Ants. Ant mounds mar the beauty of otherwise velvet-smooth lawns. They interfere



Grubs chew grass roots and the lawn can be rolled back. The damage is severe.

with mowing and may smother young grass plants. Some species such as the Harvester Ant create bare spots by clearing away grass around their nests. Others, like the Fire Ant, make large spongy areas around their nests. They become real pests if they move into the garden or house.

Harvester Ants, Fire Ants, Carpenter Ants, Argentine Ants and Lawn Ants (*Lasius niger* var. *americanus*) are some whose activities can be reduced. Repellent poisons are not recommended as they simply drive ants to new locations.

Leafhoppers and Mirids. Members of the Miridae family retard the growth of grass or even kill it in spots if they are allowed to become numerous. The same is true of leafhoppers whose damage shows up as whitened patches on the lawn. They may be prevalent in Bermuda Grass, but can be kept sufficiently controlled so that lawn damage is negligible.

Cutworms and Armyworms sometimes cause injury to grass in the form of "burned-out" spots. Close examination reveals definite evidence of chewing, with the tips of the grass blades ragged and brown. Cutworms and Armyworms can also be substantially reduced.

Mole Crickets spend most of their lives underground. However, when the soil is saturated they make temporary burrows close to the surface, pushing up the sod like miniature mole tunnels. They also eat grass roots and damage lawns that way, too. They are difficult to kill.

Old Controls Unpleasant

The job of controlling all these pests in lawns used to be extremely obnoxious. It involved working with poisonous substances that endangered birds, household pets, and even human life. Consequently it was natural to shy away from any such treatments, keeping the fingers crossed that damage would not be too severe and the cost of renovation not too great.

Now there are brilliantly successful chemicals, relatively harmless to warm blooded animals, that can be used with assurance of good results.

Most of them are available only in such form as to require application as a spray or dust. If there is much wind this is a handicap both to effectiveness and ease of application.

These objections have been overcome in a convenient Scott preparation called Pest Control. The new chemicals are blended into a dry compound that can be easily applied with a spreader, eliminating the need of diluting or mixing. This dry compound provides control of most insects harmful to lawns. Its long lasting action in the soil makes it economical and it does not shock grass.

Apply When Needed

There is no point in treating the lawn unless trouble from these pests is present or anticipated. For instance, when moths and skippers first appear in May and June, let it remind you the time is at hand to wheel out the spreader and make an application of Pest Control.

If large numbers of birds are seen on the lawn, or if moles are humping up the turf, either is sufficient evidence of the presence of larvae to warrant prompt treatment of the lawn.

Lawns CAN Be Beautiful

The country's most extensive and practical proving grounds for various lawn care methods are operated by the thousands of homeowners throughout the West.

On these lawns both products and practices are daily put to real tests. These excerpts from enthusiastic letters are evidence that beautiful lawns are within the reach of all.

Bakersfield, Calif.—For some reason it has been difficult to grow the kind of lawn we want. Apparently the sandy soil has been lacking some needed substance. The Lawn Food gives best results of any fertilizer I have tried so am ordering again and preparing to give the lawn an earlier feeding.

Oakland, Calif.—We had a good deal of Japanese Clover in our service yard and some in our front yard which was basically Bentgrass. Your Weed & Feed seemed to kill all the Japanese Clover, did not harm the desirable clover and apparently did feed the lawn.

Mayville, Ore.—I live in a high, semi-arid plateau country where good lawns are a rarity. So I was a bit skeptical when I placed my order. Not so now! With the help of your Lawn Food and spreader I have transformed two vacant weed-infested lots into a half-acre oasis. This has been accomplished with a minimum of time and money.

Richmond, Calif.—This year the appearance of my lawn has been much improved. I attribute this to Lawn Care as well as your Weed & Feed. From the hints in Lawn Care I have learned how to care for the grass in my lawn so that it maintains its beauty.

Sonoma, Calif.—The lawn food-weed control mixture killed a large patch of dandelions and mullen, leaving the grass in excellent condition.

Coos Bay, Ore.—The weed control really killed the weeds, most of which were what is called Dock Weed in our locality.

Corte Madera, Calif.—First of all I want to thank you so much in regard to my Bent Lawn. The box of Pest Control really helped a lot. I know I had Webworms because I had them last year and tried several things to kill them but nothing seemed to help. After using your Pest Control it seemed to help in just a few days. My grass looks much better than it did.

Fungus Active In Summer

Whether to water a lawn in the morning or the evening is a question asked by many folks. The most reliable evidence indicates it doesn't make a great deal of difference when one sprinkles his lawn as long as the grass is kept from drying out severely.

Some of the fungus growths harbored in lawns are most active during night-time and in the presence of moisture. Therefore, an attack of fungus disease on a lawn may be intensified by night watering.

These fungus diseases seldom cause but temporary injury to lawns. Except in unusually severe attacks only the topgrowth is damaged and the roots remain unharmed. Keeping a lawn vigorous by a regular feeding program enables the roots to continually send up new growth.

Once in a while and particularly after a wet spring season, lawns may turn somewhat straw colored. This is caused by a fungus called Leaf Spot.

Leaf Spot gets its name from the tiny dark areas that it makes on grass blades. These spots enlarge, eventually cutting across the width of the blades and causing the tips to wilt.

Brown Patch fungus is more familiar to golf course greenkeepers than to home owners. It causes definite circular brown patches in turf. Often a change in the temperature or humidity checks it just as speedily as it started.

Damping-off is the name given to a fungus responsible for dead matted spots that sometimes occur in new seed-

ings. It is favored by ample water which is necessary in the case of new plantings. When this disease is first noticed, the watering should be decreased and the damage repaired. Keep a small supply of grass seed on hand for such repairs.

Toadstools sometimes develop in moist areas where there is an excess of decaying organic matter. Frequent mowing may be all that is necessary to control them.

"I have been on a vacation, but before I left treated the lawn with the Scotts Pest Control. On my return I noticed the lawn still showed brown spots and when watered, moths flew out. I decided to give it another treatment of the Scott Pest Control. This second treatment seems to have done the trick. The lawn now appears to be clearing up entirely. All the brown spots are disappearing.

"I wish to thank you again and express my sincere appreciation for your help. You can rest assured that I shall continue to use Scotts products as I have always found them to be the best on the market."

—SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

If You Want to Keep Up on Lawns

Send for a full set of these LAWN CARE bulletins. They're chock-full of timely hints and new ideas on lawn making and maintenance. Available in a neat green leather style ring binder for \$1 or in a heavy paper binding for only 25c. At your Scott dealer or write Scotts at Palo Alto, California.



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