

Lawn Care

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FUN WITH A LAWN

GOOD turf is a serious business to the golf course greenkeeper and the park superintendent. To a homeowner it may be just a hobby. But wherever lawns are planted they represent an investment in human happiness.

Over the course of the years many substitutes for grass have been tried but most of them discarded. Nothing else gives the pleasing effect produced by a sweep of velvety grass. Even the modest plot extending from sidewalk to front door, if it is smooth, thick and green, conveys a sense of orderliness and gives a touch of natural beauty.

One busy professional man recently commented that while there were only a few hours of each week when he saw his lawn the view of its beauty was so relaxing he would never give it up.

But lawns are meant to be used as well as viewed. They afford fun around home for adults. There are picnics and barbecues, weddings and receptions. There are games like badminton, clock golf and croquet.

Good lawns are compatible with children, too. For-

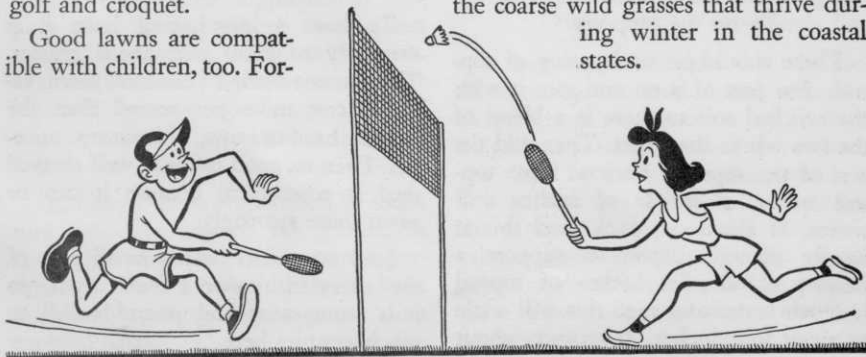
tunate are the neighborhood kids who can stay off the streets and play their football and softball on a natural covering of grass, soft and safe, free from dust and mud.

That beauty and utility can be combined is evident in the West's many beautiful golf courses, popular city parks, and emerald athletic fields.

These attractive and sturdy turf areas are not the result of any closely guarded secrets. Beneath each one lies thorough soil preparation, use of good seed and careful though not fussy maintenance.

There are a few fundamentals that apply to good lawns everywhere regardless of their use.

Most gardeners of wide experience and other grass experts agree that the fall season is an ideal time to plant new grass. Soil is warm from a whole summer of sun so germination is usually better. If planted early enough to get a good start before cold weather, it is more successful in keeping down the coarse wild grasses that thrive during winter in the coastal states.



One of the biggest advantages of this early start is that spring finds the new lawn more mature and better able to hold its beauty through the heat and drouth of its first summer. In the West, lawns can be started in August, September, and October. In the mild localities September and October are the best months. Where winters are earlier and more severe, August and September are best. Weather is outside the planter's control, but any time during these three months is a good risk.

Success is made still more certain by attention to other fundamentals of good lawn construction.

Soil Preparation

Light sandy soils lack humus and because of high porosity have a low water-holding capacity. They are improved by incorporating humus such as peat, mushroom soil or well rotted manure into the top six inches.

Heavy soils, on the other hand, compact tightly and exclude needed oxygen. They are improved by mixing in humus forming materials, also coarse sharp sand, or horticultural grades of mica or perlite. For more complete details on lawn soils ask for free copy of LAWN CARE Digest Chapter 2.

Most every community has its sources of topsoil. Where available at reasonable cost the practice prevails of using topsoil rather than improving the soil already on the property.

There should be no layering of topsoil. Put part of it on and mix it with the original soil so there is a blend of the two where they meet. Then add the rest of the topsoil. Because loose topsoil settles, a couple of inches will shrink to about one inch, and this is hardly enough depth to support a healthy stand. Six inches of topsoil is much better and even this will settle to about four inches. It requires about

24 cubic yards of soil to cover 1,000 square feet, six inches deep.

In addition to physical correction some soils need chemical correction. For example, soils too acid for good grass, such as found in parts of the Northwest, can be changed by adding lime in the form of ground agricultural limestone, dolomitic lime, or hydrated lime. (See LAWN CARE Digest Chapter 7.)

Food For Grass Roots

The first growth of young grass is sustained by food contained within the seed itself. This is soon exhausted and the seedling is then dependent on whatever soil nutrients its roots can reach. Without food grass falters in its development and turns from green to yellow. Supply this needed early nourishment by raking a liberal supply of lawn food into the seedbed just prior to sowing the seed. It is an important and worthwhile protection for the investment in soil preparation and seed.

In California and other areas where lawn moths are active into October, fall plantings can be easily protected against sod webworm damage by raking Pest Control into the seedbed. This will also protect the new lawn against grub and mole damage. If used as directed Scotts Pest Control will not reduce seed germination.

Use Good Seed

To have a long-lasting lawn it is necessary to plant permanent grasses. The narrow-bladed perennial lawn varieties cost more per pound than the coarse, hard-to-mow, temporary varieties. Even so, good quality, well cleaned seed is economical because it can be sown more sparingly.

Seed represents only a small part of the expenditure for a new lawn, so it is penny-wise and pound-foolish to pinch pennies here.

Improve Old Lawns

Owners of established lawns should not overlook the opportunities of the fall season for improving their turf. This program can be carried out regularly every year with excellent prospects of steady improvement in any lawn:

First—Mow the lawn closely.

Second—Feed the lawn wisely with a good lawn food. To insure even application and therefore even growth of the grass, use a reliable spreader.

Third—If broad-leaved weeds like dandelions, plantain and bur clover are bad, skip the second step and instead apply Scotts Weed & Feed with a spreader. This controls susceptible weeds while feeding the grass. After this particular treatment wait a week before sowing the seed.

Fourth—Sow fine-textured perennial grass seed. With good seed well cleaned, only two or three pounds per 1,000 square feet is needed over an old lawn. Seeding is another step where even distribution without waste is desirable and a precision spreader will accomplish that.

Fifth—After sowing the seed keep the lawn moist to hasten germination and seedling growth.

Sixth—Mow regularly, particularly if Crabgrass is in active growth.

Seventh—If you do not already have a complete set of these LAWN CARE bulletins get one today. Contains digest of earlier bulletins plus all latest editions. Available in neat green leather style ring binder, which enables easy filing of future bulletins—\$1.00. You can get them at your Scott dealer or send check, cash or stamps to Scotts, Palo Alto, California.

Thirsty Lawns

Most lawns need supplemental supplies of moisture to keep them green and growing when rainfall is deficient. Watering cannot be put on a calendar schedule because conditions on any lawn are not likely to remain the same day in and day out.

On breezy days, evaporation of moisture from the top of the ground is faster than on calm days. Protected portions of the lawn are likely to have different watering requirements than exposed parts.

In shaded areas there is less loss of moisture by evaporation from the surface layer of soil. Particularly in the case of summer planted seed is this demonstrated by the quicker germination of seed in these spots. In the case of an established lawn, however, even though a tree may provide shade, additional supplies of water are necessary because the tree gets thirsty too. A good sized tree may take up as much as 125 gallons of water a day.

The length of the grass is also involved. If your mower is adjusted to cut 1½ inches high, which is good practice on most lawns, particularly during summer weather, then water replacement is less critical because evaporation is retarded.

Lawn areas sloping to the south dry faster than other areas.

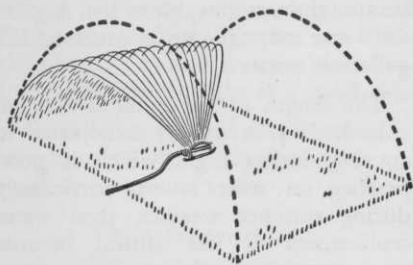
Soils containing plenty of humus like peat or well rotted manure have a reserve supply so sprinkling may be less frequent.

Until one learns to know his whole lawn and the varying characteristics of it, it is safest to use a narrow trowel or knife to cut a plug from the lawn. If the upper half inch or so shows any sign of dryness, it is time to water. Bringing the moisture level up through the top half-inch is very simple, but if the soil is allowed to dry deeper than that it is difficult.

How Much Water?

It has been estimated that the loss of water by evaporation and transpiration from an average loam soil is about 50 gallons per 1,000 square feet of lawn per day. In three days this would be 150 gallons per 1,000 square feet, or the same as ¼ inch of rain. It would take a good sprinkler at 20 pounds pressure about one or two hours to replace this amount of water on 1,000 square feet.

Very heavy compact soils absorb water slowly. With a fast-delivery sprinkler, water may be applied faster than the heavy soil can drink it in. Puddling results and this in turn can cause scalding of the grass. If new seed has been planted it may float away, causing thin or bare spots in the lawn.



Modern sprinklers make simple work of lawn watering.

On heavy soils the use of an oscillating type sprinkler has the advantage of allowing one side of the lawn to absorb the water just applied, while the other side is being sprinkled.

Night Or Day?

It is not of much consequence whether a lawn is watered at night or during the day. Night watering is safe unless there is evidence of fungus disease on the lawn. Most turf fungi are active at night and their activity is stepped up if the grass is wet then.

Day watering is also safe as long as the water is not applied so fast as to puddle and result in scald.

"Have been very well satisfied with both Lawn Food and Spreader. Only objection to spreader is that I can't keep it at home. When I loan it out by the time I get it back half the town has used it."—GRANGEVILLE, IDAHO.

What To Do If You Have Crabgrass

Crabgrass is a country-wide weed which gets its start in the thin open areas of weak lawns.

Like most annual weeds there is little need to worry about pulling out the roots because they will die right in the ground. Emphasis should be placed on preventing seed production which is responsible for next year's crop.

In late July or early August Crabgrass begins to form seed heads. Frequent mowing cuts off many of these. But some of the seed stems lie flat on the ground where the mower does not reach. It is necessary to stand these up by raking. Then mow them off and catch the clippings.

Careful attention to this cross-raking and cross-mowing throughout the late summer will materially reduce next year's crop.

Toward the end of the season an application of good lawn food and an overseeding of high quality perennial grass seed will reinforce the turf.

This is important because in late fall the annual Crabgrass dies, permitting the desirable grasses to stool out and thrive unhindered. With another good feeding in the spring the lawn is in a stronger position to resist Crabgrass that may sprout in May and June from seeds in the soil.

A complete discussion of Crabgrass is given in LAWN CARE Digest Chapter 9. Ask for a free copy.

"There are lots of spreaders for sale in the hardware stores here but my 15 year old Scotts Spreader has stood up so well—is still serviceable—that I'm buying another."—EDMONDS, WASH.

O M SCOTT & SONS CO.



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