

# Lawn Care

T.M. REG

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## START LAWNS RIGHT

**L**AWN growing is an intensive type of farming. The grass crop is planted after relatively little soil preparation. Yet to have a reasonably thick sod, it is estimated that each square foot must support 400 grass plants.

From this plot of ground a crop is harvested more times than from any farm land—about once a week for six and sometimes twelve months a year. This represents a productivity of 20 to 40 crops annually.

After the original working of the seed bed no cultivation is made for the life of the lawn. Once the lawn is in, very little can be done to alter the makeup of the soil which serves as the home of the grass for many years.

Is it any wonder, then, that soil of good physical structure is so desirable?

### Soil Profile

At least half the structure of grass plants is below the surface of the soil. In good earth grass roots extend down for 8 or 10 inches. They are able to

draw on a large volume of soil for moisture and nutrients, can better withstand drouth, heat or cold. Deep rooted lawns are consistently healthy and attractive.

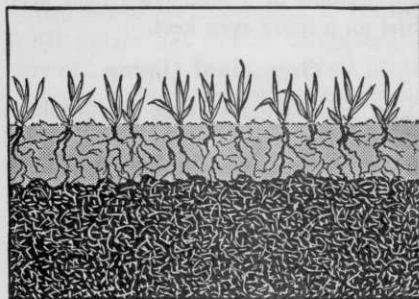
On poor soil grass roots all develop at the surface and their stunted development produces a stunted topgrowth.

Any provision for good soil at the top six inches of a lawn is likely to be well rewarded. Good soil means plenty of humus.

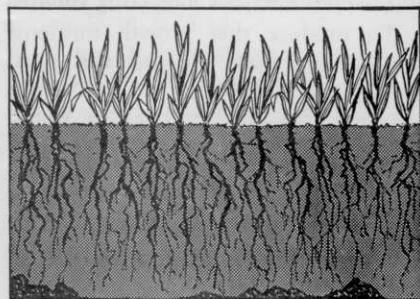
### Why Humus?

Sandy soils lack humus. Water drains down through them rapidly, taking with it much valuable plant nutrient material. In addition, the excessive circulation of air evaporates large volumes of soil moisture. The resultant drying out and starvation becomes evident in a thin, anaemic stand of grass. Mixing substantial amounts of humus in sandy soils prevents this.

Many heavy or clay soils also lack humus and although they have a bet-



Thin topsoil means shallow roots and stunted growth that damages easily, recovers slowly.



Mixing humus through top six inches makes deeper soil, longer roots and better lawns.

ter water holding capacity, their compactness excludes oxygen which is just as necessary as water.

Generous amounts of humus mixed into clay soils permits the entry of air and the easy penetration of hairlike grass roots.

Peat moss and composted manure are two of the best forms of humus for this purpose. Most lawns would turn out better if more attention were given to mixing these materials into the soil instead of limiting their use to surface applications as a cover for seed to hasten its germination.

About 4 bales of peat or 2 to 3 cubic yards of manure per 1000 square feet are good amounts to work into the top 6 inches of soil. Mixing should be thorough and time allowed for settling.

These humus materials provide only a negligible amount of nutrients and should not be considered as fertilizers. They are amendments that improve the physical, rather than the chemical, makeup of the soil.

### Three Meals a Year

The importance of regular meals can hardly be overemphasized.

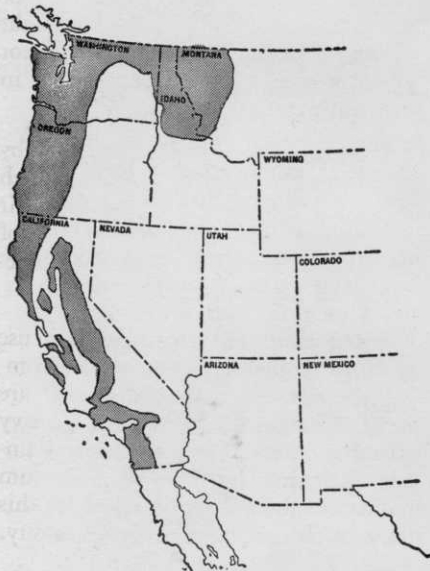
A lawn that is cut 25 times a year yields a foot or more of growth to the mower blades. When multiplied by the number of grass plants on a lawn, this harvest reaches a staggering volume.

To produce that growth nutrients are drained from the soil and must be replaced or the soil will soon be depleted. No intelligent farmer would think of taking so many crops from the same land without putting something back into it. Leaving clippings does not compensate for this.

In the beginning, the seed bed should be well fertilized. This gets new grass off to a good vigorous start. After it is up and has been mowed,

feeding it three meals a year or oftener where required is good management.

It is best to select a specialized lawn food as many fertilizers are formulated with plants other than grass in mind. A desirable lawn food is clean, weed-free, has no objectionable odor and is easy to apply.



Shaded areas have soils of medium and low lime content.—U. S. D. A. Bulletin No. 1845.

Quick acting but short lasting shot-in-the-arm fertilizers are spectacular but not necessarily healthful. Moderation is a good rule for lawns and frequent applications of a mild lawn food keep turf on a more even keel.

### Occasional Liming

In dry regions lime accumulates faster than it is consumed or leached from the soil. But in humid regions a deficiency occurs, and an application of ground limestone, dolomitic lime or ground oyster or clam shells may increase productivity of the soil.

Many but not all California soils are overly rich in lime and added amounts

can not be recommended. However, in some of the northern coast counties and also in western Oregon and Washington soils may have a medium or low lime content. (See map.)

Not all soils that need lime need it for the same purpose.

The correction of moderate or strong acidity is the commonly thought of use for lime. This is the purpose for which it would most likely be used in the northwest.

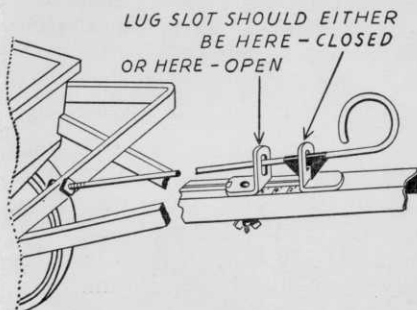
Lime may also prove beneficial by supplying the element calcium which is needed by plants to build up their tissues. Calcium is considered one of the first 10 elements essential to practically all green plants.

Still a third and very important use of lime is the improvement of compacted soils. Even small amounts are quite effective in "crumbling" heavy soils that otherwise hinder proper drainage and circulation of air. Gypsum (calcium sulphate) is also used for this purpose. It does not correct soil acidity.

The best time to apply lime is in the fall or winter when rains or freezing and thawing of the soil aid its penetration and its action.

Usually the amounts required vary from 50 to 100 pounds of ground limestone per 1000 square feet. On established lawns no more than 50 lbs. per 1000 square feet should be applied in any one season. In the seed bed preparation, however, the entire amount can be used at one time if thoroughly mixed with the top 6 inches of soil.

The time to build a good foundation for your lawn is when you first plant it. It is easiest then and costs the least. More detailed information will be found in *LAWN CARE Digest* Chapters 2 and 3. Ask for these free bulletins.



## Check Your Spreader

A properly assembled Scotts Spreader provides accurate application of seed, lawn food, weed controls and pest control. A quick way to verify the assembly is to check whether the notch in the lug on the control rod engages readily in the stationary bracket.

If it pulls through, the Spreader will apply too much material. If the lug cannot be pulled back to easily engage in the bracket, then it is too lean.

If either difficulty exists, it may be easily corrected by adjusting the two nuts at the end of the control rod, turning up if the lug pulls through (i. e., shortening the rod), or down if the lug does not pull back far enough to engage the bracket.

When set at scale mark 10, a Scotts Spreader should be half open at the bottom of the hopper, the openings being  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. x  $\frac{1}{4}$  in.

When using the Spreader some folks make the mistake of not shutting it off as they turn it around. This results in serious overdosage at such points, causing waste or even injury if fertilizer and weed controls are being applied.

Prescribed setting rates are for a normal brisk walk. If the operator's pace is definitely slow, then the Spreader should be set one number smaller than called for in the directions.

The directions in each package of a Scotts product carry the specific Spreader setting number. It is wise to take a moment to refer to these and not trust to memory in selecting the scale number.

The Spreader will last longer if it is washed thoroughly after use, then dried and oiled. Stand the Spreader on end and apply oil so it flows between the wheel hub and axle. Do this from inside the hopper too.

"Your spreader works beautifully. We used it for some seeding and it appears to have done the job perfectly. Also, we tried spreading fertilizer on some of our field plots with equally good success. I believe it will enable us to do an even job and to make applications on days when the wind is too strong to permit broadcasting by hand."—RENO, NEV.

## LAWN TIPS

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More and more folks are finding it worthwhile to invest in a lawn sweeper. The typical machine is an arrangement of revolving brushes mounted between two wheels. A wire-frame canvas catcher is provided into which leaves, grass clippings and other debris are swept by the revolving brushes.

These lawn implements are handy in other than the fall season. On a large lawn, time may be saved if the catcher

is not used in mowing. Instead the clippings may be quickly picked up with the sweeper. There is less bulk to dispose of after the clippings have dried for a day.

A sweeper also picks up small leaves, such as from live oaks, that are very hard to remove in hand raking.

There are also power operated vacuum cleaners for leaf-removal which grind the material and deposit it back on the lawn. These are large tractor-drawn machines suitable for parks and golf courses.

## Guard Against Winter Weeds Now

Particularly in western Washington and Oregon and in California many moisture-loving, cool-temperature weeds invade weak lawns during winter. These take the form of native wild grasses such as oatgrass, barley, brome-grass, poa annua. They are undesirable because most of them give the lawn a coarse texture.

Feed your lawn in September and October to thicken it up. Dense sod retards invasion of these coarse winter grass weeds.

Fall is also the best time to reinforce your lawn with additional seed and to patch up bare places. Use good seed. A little goes a long way for it can be sown much lighter than chaffy, coarse, cheap seed.

Bermuda grass lawns should be thinned out, cut close, then fertilized and overseeded.

Take Nature's tip—seed your lawn this fall.

O M SCOTT & SONS CO.



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EVERY PACKAGE OF SCOTTS LAWN CARE PRODUCTS BEARS THIS TRADE-MARK AND IS SEALED FOR YOUR PROTECTION