

Lawn Care

T.M. REG
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FOLLOW NATURE—SEED IN THE FALL

There is one best time to start a new lawn, to renovate a poor one or to give a beauty treatment to any lawn. That is late summer or fall. In most climates from the last of August thru September and into October is ideal for sowing seed and for growth of seedling grass.

It's never too late to seed in the fall—as long as the soil can be worked. If the ground can be prepared in November it's better to proceed even though the seed will not germinate until the next spring. The lawn will be ahead of one

until the final preparation is delayed until the passing of winter.

In their natural state, grasses bloom in summer but nature delays the dropping of seeds and their after ripening until August or September. The seeds then fall on warm soil at a time when hot days are growing shorter, cool nights longer, dews heavier, and soil moisture more favorable.

There is economy in fall seeding. The cultural loss from planting is less because of better natural conditions for germination and seedling growth. Weed competition is reduced and there is less disease—all in all a better chance for each seed to produce a mature plant.

When the right seed is selected for fall planting, a lower rate of seeding will produce equal or better turf than a much heavier rate of spring seeding.

Based on careful tests over many years it can be expected that with average soil conditions, a planting of 4 pounds of good seed per 1000 sq ft in the fall will produce thicker and better turf than 6 to 8 pounds in the spring.

What to Sow
What is the right seed for fall planting? (1) It must be composed of perennial varieties that will not winterkill. (2) The seed should be of properly cured and thoroughly recleaned quality, free of bulky chaff and coarse varieties.

Such seed can be planted sparingly. Most folks plant two or three times as much as they should. This is not only wasteful—it is harmful. The grass comes up too thick—it is just as wrong to try to grow too many grass plants on a given area as to house a hundred people in quarters meant for ten.

Folks often have the idea they should sow heavily because "the soil is poor." That is a mistake. Poorer soils will not support a large number of plants as well as a few. Liberal use of grass food before sowing will help, but extra heavy seeding—never!

Feed in the Fall A good place to invest part of the saving in using less seed is in lawn food. This will help the new seedlings get off to a better start, insuring quicker coverage, more vigorous growth and a uniform stand of new grass seedlings.



Fall feeding is especially important after an excessively rainy spring and summer. Surplus moisture causes a heavy loss of nutrients because of leaching and rank vegetative growth. A good feeding in late summer or fall will restore the nutrient reserve and strengthen grass roots against the rigors of a coming winter.

Fall Lawn Program

Stop Weeds Fortunately most weeds are now easily controlled by chemical applications. The worst and toughest summer weed is crabgrass. It is stopped by the simple SCUTL-ing process, two or three applications at weekly intervals.

Dandelions, plantain, ground ivy and other non-grass weeds are killed by spreading 4-XD or WEED & FEED.

Since it is not advisable to apply SCUTL and other weed controls simultaneously, the suggestion is to first use 4-XD or WEED & FEED. Wait a few days, then start the SCUTL program.

The lethal action of chemicals on weeds is through the leaves. A rain or sprinkling within twelve hours of application will reduce the effectiveness and may necessitate a repeat. Whatever is used—be sure to follow the directions that come with the product.

Feeding Is Next This may precede the last application of weed control or be applied afterward. If the latter, wait a couple of days as otherwise the walk over the lawn will knock off many particles, lessening weed control.

Prepare for Seeding To be sure that residue from weed controls will not affect seeds, a heavy rain or sprinkling should soak the ground between times. This does not delay the program because abundant surface soil moisture is needed to germinate the seeds anyway. If the weather continues dry and the lawn cannot be watered, finish up weeding and feeding so that seeding can follow the first soaking rain.

Seeds need moisture to germinate and the root hairs from the sprouting

grass must be able to reach soil moisture quickly. Little moisture is available to seeds lying on top of the ground exposed to sun and wind.

If seed is sown into a rather good turf, shade from the grass will protect the seed and sprouts to a degree. But if sowing is in thin grass with sizeable bare spots some help is needed. Any roughening, perforating or loosening of the soil gives the seed a better chance. Tools that can be used to aid in perforating the surface for better seed reception include the heavy iron garden rake, a spading fork like the kind used to dig potatoes, a spike tamp.

A flat spade, ice hoe, an edging tool, a mattock or even an axe may be used



to cut shallow gashes in the soil where seed may lodge, be protected from the sun and find a moisture supply. If the roughening operation severs roots of established grass no particular harm is done as the plants will soon heal the injury.

Most seed is sown by hand, but a two-wheel mechanical spreader of good design for seeding will save both seed and time and insure more even growth.

A good practice after seeding is a shallow covering of soil that has been screened through a quarter-inch mesh screen. Some folks are expert at scattering this with a shovel, others broadcast the soil as they would seed. Only a light covering is advised, not over a quarter-inch; heavier covering will retard early growth. One cubic yard will dress 1,000 to 2,000 square feet. Top dressing also serves to smooth up an uneven surface.

Aside from nurseries or landscape contractors, greenhouses are possible sources of supply of satisfactory top-dressing soil. The latter offer what they call spent bench soil. In some commu-

nities, compost is available from commercial mushroom growers. Black muck or raw peat is no good. The important thing is friable physical condition like a good garden loam. Do not judge on color alone. One trouble with topdressing is that it may bring in weeds.

Care After Seeding If possible keep newly seeded areas moist. This hastens germination and seedling growth. Once started, watering must be continued until the grass is well rooted. If it's not feasible to follow this watering program do not start it. Sooner or later rainfall will come and when there is enough moisture the grass seed will germinate.

The standard recommendation for most lawns is cutting one and one-half to two inches high, especially through hot weather. This practice should be modified as new grass starts coming up in an old lawn. Closer cutting, at an inch or so, to prevent the old grass from smothering the new, is advised. The mower may be raised as colder weather approaches although there is advantage in having grass go into winter with a fairly short growth.

Honeysuckle and other vines oftentimes grow into shrubby beds and other places where not wanted. Hand pulling is only a temporary solution because the roots soon send up new growth. One possible solution is to shake 4 X-D on the leaves of the unwanted plants—doing this when the leaves are moist so the granules stick to them. Honeysuckle will be dead as a door nail in a few days.

Weed Seeds in Topsoil

SIRS:

We got some topsoil about two years ago that turned out to be trash. It was of poor quality and impregnated with Bermuda Grass seed and onions. I was surprised to see at least six morning glory vines start, although none had been in the yard for the ten years since we built our home. Those seeds no doubt have been in the soil waiting for a chance to express themselves.

G. PHILIP STOUT,
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Baltimore, Maryland.

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Owners of Scotts spreaders have a valuable tool that makes lawn work easier and more productive. They get the most out of their investment by regular servicing according to the suggestions in the Spreader Service Manual.

There is no charge for this manual. Just drop a postal card to Scotts, Marysville, Ohio, asking for a copy.

Flushing Out Chinch Bugs

A LAWN CARE reader reports that in late June, brown patches occurred in scattered locations in the sunny part of his lawn. The browned spots were irregular in shape, in some cases all the grass was off color, in others the grass just thinned out.

This damage developed during a rather wet period so Chinch Bugs were not very suspect. Even so, remembering the emphasis in LAWN CARE of Chinch Bugs working in hot, sunny lawn areas this alert reader decided to look for them. (LAWN CARE digest chapter 10).

Knowing how difficult it is to find Chinch Bugs, this owner hit on the novel

idea of trying to flip the bugs onto a piece of white cardboard. A flick of the hand at the edge of the affected turf and he had hundreds of blackish colored adult

and reddish-brown young Chinch Bugs on his cardboard—the reason for the brown grass.

It took the owner only a few minutes to get out his spreader and stop his Chinch Bugs with PEST CONTROL.



Cop Scents Foul Odor

'Twaren't hay, and 'twaren't legal, neither, so a pair of New Jersey fertilizer peddlers, whose product reportedly was not all they claimed it to be, ran afoul of the law in Bridgeport, Connecticut, according to a recent story in the Bridgeport Post.

Hoping to make their usual easy and fruitful sales to an unsuspecting victim, the men accidentally called at the home of a police sergeant. Scenting trouble, he called headquarters, had the peddlers taken in custody for peddling without license and fraudulent misrepresentation.



The investigation disclosed that the "fertilizer" was the usual tired, worthless "humus" that the first wind drives away, a racket not meriting attention of the Kefauver committee but exposed in *LAWN CARE* a dozen times, most recently in No 113.

Soil Samples Quarantined

The Scott soil testing service as outlined in *Lawn Care* No. 115 is available to *LAWN CARE* readers all over the country.

However, some do not realize they are located within the Jap Beetle quarantine zone of the East and accordingly are restricted from sending soil to Marysville, Ohio.

Any samples originating in the quarantine zone (*practically all places east of the Alleghenies*) should be addressed to:

O M Scott & Sons Co
Ridgefield, New Jersey

If in doubt, call your Post Office and inquire if you are within the Jap Beetle quarantine zone.

GRASS MUST EAT

*You can't expect a lawn to thrive
On air and dew and wishes.
How long would folks like us survive
Confined to loaves and fishes?
Grass has to eat the same as us
To make it lush and mellow.
When starved it may not make a fuss,
But, boy, can it turn yellow!*

Do You Need Help

This is issue 117 of the *Lawn Care* bulletin service published continuously since August, 1928. Through boom-time and depression, war and peace the annual cycle has been maintained.

Though issue numbers have been dropped, every discussion of lasting interest is still in print in the digest chapters or reprints of earlier issues. Some of the important subjects covered and available for the asking are:

	Digest Chapter	Issue Number
<i>New Lawns</i>	1-4	
<i>Proper Mowing</i>	5	
<i>Watering Lawns</i>	6	
<i>Liming</i>		114
<i>Grass in Shade</i>	13	
<i>Summer Problems</i>	10,11	
<i>Weeds and Crabgrass</i>	8, 13	111,116
<i>Soil Test Service</i>		115

LAWN CARE BOOKS



All digest chapters and the more important recent issues are available in convenient permanent form. The set in a loose-leaf ring binder with room for many additional

issues is one dollar postpaid. The digest and current issues in a heavy paper cover is twenty-five cents, postpaid.

O M SCOTT & SONS CO.



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