

Lawn Care

T.M. REG

PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES YEARLY FOR LAWNTHUSIASTS

FALL IS LAWN FIX-UP TIME

THE fall offers natural grass growing advantages in practically all sections of the country. Whether it's Minnesota or Georgia, the season after Labor Day brings cooler nights, heavier dews and favorable rains. At the same time, the soil is warm and there is enough good sunshine and moisture to germinate new seeds and nurture them into deep rooting plants.

September through December is also good seeding time on the West Coast because it precedes the period of desirable rains. Nature co-operates to the fullest in trying to make every seed produce a vigorous plant.

Those who work in the flower garden know that early fall is the time to

sow perennials. The young plants grow slowly but sturdily in the cooler weather, developing a good root structure with only limited top growth. So it is with the better varieties of grass which are perennial.

In the more severe climates, winter may be hard on growing things, but plants are endowed by Nature to fortify themselves against cold by building up food reserves in preparation for dormancy.

The accompanying illustration shows that seed is safely sown in the latitude of Central Ohio even as late as December. Such results are not limited to Ohio. Many state experiment stations report the same results as have home



October, November and December seedings have all given good results as these SCOTTS Test Plot pictures show. Seeds in upper plots did not germinate until Spring, 1948, but produced excellent stands well before summer.

owners and landscape contractors. Year-old plots are pictured and these bear out similar observations over a period of 25 years.

In practical application, it is seldom possible to sow new lawns as late as December because the soil is not in condition to be worked. The test plots had been prepared earlier in the fall and the seed simply scattered over the area in early December, without raking or covering. The real point is that it is all right to go ahead with seeding whenever the soil is ready.

The fall months of the year call for other lawn work in addition to seeding. It is a good time to get rid of broad-leaved weeds. Most varieties are more vulnerable in the fall than at any other season. Moreover, after the weed control gets in its licks, there is opportunity to sow seed and start new grass in spots left by the departed weeds.

Fall feeding is important. Slow rains soak nutrient materials into the ground, nourishing roots to deeper growth and building up winter reserves.

Winter Lawns in the South

Those living where temperatures do not often go below freezing can have the advantage of green grass all winter long. Those sections usually have summer lawns of native grasses but they turn brown after frosts.

Such lawns are kept green longer if regularly fed, especially in the fall. Water may also be needed in the earlier part of the winter.

Southern lawns, for example, can be green all winter if the summer lawn is cut short and then seeded with the type of grasses responsible for outstanding lawns in the North during the summer. Liberal use of special lawn food should precede the planting. This program is especially successful in Florida and in the Southwest where there is

plenty of sunshine and balmy weather through the winter.

Late Fall Maintenance Hints

Where leaves are a problem, mow the grass fairly short. It will then be easier to rake or sweep off the leaves.

Leaves should be removed, especially from new seedings. If not, rains may mat them so they smother the grass.

Some varieties of trees shed leaves all winter. These leaves create special problems if they are flattened against the ground and then freeze. Grass plants underneath are sure to succumb.

It is well to continue mowing any lawn as long as the grass is growing.

Fall or winter is a good time to apply lime, if needed, also for applications of grub controls where such difficulty is anticipated.

SIRS:

One thing I learned from LAWN CARE is the identity of the insect that people call "sand bees" and for which at last I have a correct name—Golden Digger Wasps.

This locality runs heavily to sand and is a favorite with those wasps because of the ease with which their holes can be made. I tried swinging at them with a broom as they flew back and forth while protecting their holes. That was a failure due to the great resistance offered by the broadside of the weapon. Then I invented a better way, using a cluster of three to five lilac suckers. These can be swung rapidly from side to side, offer hardly any resistance to the air, and cannot be seen as easily by the dodging insect. After a few lusty swings, one feels an impact and that means another digger has met his doom.

B. F. FERGUSON
Dobbs Ferry, New York.



Sign on a newly seeded lawn at Wellesley College: "Don't Ruin the Gay Young Blades!"

RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS IN AGRICULTURE

No Split Atoms for Lawns—Yet

The Atomic Energy Commission and the U. S. Department of Agriculture are studying the effect of radioactive materials on growth of plants. Experiments previously conducted in Europe and America have been conflicting and inconclusive.

Reports of exceptionally good crops near Nagasaki have stimulated interest in the problem. Investigations by qualified scientists, however, failed to reveal a basis for the claim that radiation from the atomic bomb benefited crops.

Even if there is some indication of improved crop growth, the problem of effect on seed germination will require serious study, to mention just one of the accompanying problems.

SIRS:

I am purchasing a new home under construction. According to the contract the lawn is to be done by the builder.

But I plan to buy the seed for it is understood that many contractors use only the cheapest grass seed that can only provide a troublesome lawn in the long run.

By furnishing him with good quality Scotts Seed at this time, I feel confident I will be well rewarded with a permanent lawn around my new home for the small additional expense involved.

ROBERT J. BROWN

Valley Stream, L. I.

SIRS:

Please accept my hearty congratulations on the hundredth issue of *LAWN CARE*. I shall look forward to reading the next hundred issues with continuing profit and interest.

I particularly wish to commend the excellence of the digest chapters in the new *LAWN CARE* binder. It seems to me that this is a very superior job of writing, telling everything that should be said without one unnecessary word.

PAUL L. VITTUR, President
Sunset Hill Cemetery.

Jamestown, N. Y.

What Have You Done About Crabgrass?

The wet, hot summer in many sections has made Crabgrass grow more vigorously than ever. It is still difficult of control but basically all that is needed is to keep it from going to seed.

The editors of *LAWN CARE* would like to hear of new experiences in Crabgrass Control, particularly from those who may have tried chemical treatment. A summary of reports, without names, will be published. Of particular interest will be time and number of treatments, ease of application, results as measured by effect on desirable grasses as well as Crabgrass.

In *LAWN CARE* No. 98, Dr. Smiley asked for suggestions regarding edging the lawn along concrete walks and drives. And how the suggestions poured in!

The gist of the advice was: (1) do not maintain a trough or ditch, it catches weed



seeds and trips the ladies with high heels; (2) use a turf edger or grass shears to trim neatly and with ease; (3) another school suggested filling along walks and drives with a narrow band of sifted gravel. The mower wheel can

run along this, eliminating most of the trimming job. One man installs a narrow concrete runway along his walk and drives. This is wide enough to accommodate one wheel of the mower and is slightly lower than the walk so the grass is cut evenly.

Many folks like to use one of several turf edgers on the market. These may be the simple half-moon shape cutting spade or the more elaborate tools that make a sharp vertical cut, provided the edge of the walk or drive is fairly even. There are also the edgers that look like half a lawn mower. Some use old butcher or bread knives or even sickles, cutting with a saw-like stroke.

One *LAWN CARE* reader uses salt to maintain a sterile border of soil next to his walks. He has to be careful though to put it on where he wants it and not onto the lawn.

Soil Clinic Proves Popular

The establishment of Scotts soil testing service was announced in **LAWN CARE** No. 100. Many readers took advantage of the opportunity to get a complete laboratory analysis and criticism of their soils.

It is obvious that such a service was needed. Many soils proved to be excessively acid in reaction—58% of those tested at Yonkers. This was not surprising in Eastern soils, but even at Columbus almost one fourth of the soils tested were in need of lime.

This is not to be taken as a general recommendation to lime every lawn. However, if turf suffers unduly in hot weather, if it fails to respond to feedings or irrigation, then the need for lime may be indicated.

There was quite a difference in typical physical conditions of samples examined at the two laboratories. Generally the Eastern soils ran to the lighter sandy soils and loams, soils that dry rapidly and do not retain nutrients well. In contrast more than half the Columbus samples were of heavy compact structure. About 25% of the Midwest soils were identified as sands or light sandy loams.

Sending Samples

The soil testing service provides a report describing the physical classification, the need for lime and the best cultural practices for the soil or soils sampled.

The charge for the service is \$1.00 for the first sample and 50c for each additional one. Sampling procedure should be as follows:

Established Turf—Cut actual plugs of sod from the lawn, using a trowel or flat spade.

Have them at least 4 inches square and 5 or 6 inches deep. Wrap firmly in waxed paper so plug reaches laboratory as nearly as possible like it was taken from the ground.

Loose Materials—About a pint of bulk is required. The sample of soil or humus should be representative of the whole. Mix materials from various locations to make a composite sample. Keep soils separate that are conspicuously different.

Advise by letter the number of samples being sent, stating the problem or question.

Put letter in addressed envelope carrying letter postage, and paste to outside of package.

Place your return address on package as well as the address of the laboratory. Affix stamps to package at parcel post rates.

Two Laboratories

Those residing in the Allegheny Mountains or east of them should forward samples to

O. M. Scott & Sons Co.
Ridgefield, New Jersey.

West of the Alleghenies:

O. M. Scott & Sons Co.
Marysville, Ohio.

A bill for the soil testing services will be sent with the report.

LAWN CARE has been published continuously since 1928. The data in the older issues have been brought up-to-date and condensed into a twelve chapter digest edition.



This can be had in a sturdy loose leaf ring binder at one dollar, post-paid, including the complete digest and the separate issues of recent publication.

The same bulletins are available in a paper bound file at twenty-five cents.

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