

# Lawn Care

Lawns should be spring green, not summer tan

## The Crabgrass And I

Customarily the lead story in *Lawn Care* is a digest of material from many sources and is written by our staff. But this page from the garden diary of R. J. DeGray was too good to keep. He has not only told his story well but with feeling. That is why we asked him to share it. ED.



When we moved into our present home in 1948 I surveyed the long-neglected lawn, feeling something like Old MacDonald, with "here a little crabgrass, there a little crabgrass, everywhere some crabgrass." But the situation was not one to sing about so we promptly set to work and our garden diary for 1949 and 1950 records the blow by blow account of what seemed a losing battle.

We tried to pull it up with our bare hands, only to find that every time we uprooted a stalk at the northeast corner of the lawn, a seedpod shook at the southwest corner. We tried herky-jerky mowing, mowing from different directions, and one of us raked ahead of the mower in a vain attempt to chop off the raised stems before they could seed. The result was a herky-jerky backache and just as much crabgrass as ever.

Then, in 1951, we tried Scotts Scutl (phenyl mercuric acetate). According to our diary it was applied on June 25. It rained on June 26 and kept it up for three days. Scutl was applied again on July 1, just after a light rain, followed by four days of clear weather. By July 7 we felt like setting off a belated fire-cracker for here and there the crabgrass was turning light green and

then the sickly yellow that foretold its eventual demise.

The fight was far from over but by the time crabgrass seeding started in mid-August the pest was reduced to obvious patches and we were confident that with Scutl as our ally, another year would find the loathsome weed thoroughly routed.



By last year our determination to lick crabgrass knew no bounds so we went into experimenting. We used Scutl again on the east lawn but reserved the west lawn for parallel testing of other treatments. The application was on July 5, following a light hose sprinkling to help adherence of the compound to the blades of grass. The second application was made on July 12, again after a sprinkling. There was no rain until July 17. These good conditions gave ideal results. Occasional patches of surviving crabgrass were glaringly obvious and so few that we easily pulled them out by hand.

No such success with our test area, the west lawn. An initial treatment with a liquid applied as a spray failed completely and by August 1 the lawn was a mass of crabgrass.



Next we tried a powder designed for spray application when crabgrass is mature. We followed directions exactly, even to measuring off areas of 135 square feet, each to receive 5 teaspoons in dilution. Application was made with a sprinkling can . . . how my arms and back ached. By August 9 the crabgrass was as healthy as ever. The next time we used

a commercial sprayer that wet down every last blade of grass. The whole job took back-breaking hours — never again! The results were fine for six days but before frost a whole new generation was flourishing. The Scutl-ed east lawn, however, stayed completely free of the hated intruder.

*Many diligent lawnkeepers started the Crabgrass and disease control program earlier in the season as suggested in LAWN CARE 127. Those who did not may find tiny, innocent-looking plants just appearing. Some are beginning to branch out and will start a serious invasion of the lawn if not checked. It is now high time to take the offensive with Scutl to prevent this intruder from taking over the lawn.*

### Advice Re New Lawns

Early to mid-summer is just about the most difficult time to start a new lawn. Late summer — early fall is the best time.

If you must seed in summer to get out of the mud, it is probably better to use a quicker growing blend like Scotts Special. Some folks sow lawn clover — it grows fast, makes a satisfactory temporary cover.

A straw mulch of an inch or two, will help keep down weeds and conserve moisture. Brings problems, though. If the wind doesn't drive it away, may mat down, smother grass. Unthreshed grain heads may sprout into coarse clumps. The best advice — try to put up with bare ground for a few weeks. Plan a mid-August seeding. Meanwhile —

- a) get soil test to learn if lime is needed
- b) add humus material or extra good top-soil to improve soil condition
- c) cultivate to improve tilth
- d) most important — get lime, turf builder, seed and tools ready. Planting time gets around before you know it

### Florida Tool

... Quite a while ago your company sent some Scutl to the Department. I checked it for control of crabgrass in a young centipede lawn [native southern grass]. This material gave good control and did not damage the centipede.

TAYLOR R. ALEXANDER  
Chairman, Dept of Botany  
University of Miami

### Orchids to Scutl



In our mail these past weeks have been clippings and comments from lawnthusiasts about a feature article in one of the important national home and garden magazines which had conducted a contest for the best suggestion on how to get rid of Crabgrass. Our well wishers were as pleased as we that the first and second prize winners used Scutl and gave it major credit for their successful battle against Crabgrass. Mention was made too of the geographical adaptability of Scutl with one winner on the East Coast, the other in the Southwest. As one reader summed it up — "Take a bow Scutl, you have slain the Dragon."

### Too Much Rain

Excessive rainfall during April and May produced soft, lush grass growth, very susceptible to injury from sunburn, trampling, insect and disease activity. The severe injury that may follow a sudden change to hot, dry weather can be alleviated by the following program of first aid—

- a) raising height of cut to provide a bit more protection to grass stems and roots. Clippings should be removed. If many have accumulated this spring, try to brush them out.
- b) watering lightly at first sign of surface drying, gradually spreading intervals between waterings. Apply more water as deeper soil is relieved of its saturated condition, responsible for restricted root development.

If grass is in soft, lush condition it is more easily injured in hot weather by application of lawn food, insect or weed controls. However, as the grass "hardens off", it will benefit from a light feeding. Weed, insect and disease controls should follow later as needed.

## SUMMER PROGRAM — June and July

	DeLuxe Lawn*	Good Lawn*	Utility Lawn*
Feeding	5 lbs Turf Builder	5 lbs Turf Builder	5 lbs Turf Builder
Mowing	Raise mower to 1¼ - 1½ inches. Remove clippings	Raise mower to 1½ - 2 ins Remove heavy clippings	Raise mower to 2 inches or higher. Let clippings fall
Watering Frequency	Try to keep constantly moist. Fast drying soils may need moderate watering two or three times weekly	As required to keep grass from wilting and browning. Heavy watering except on fast draining soils	Occasional watering in extreme periods of drought
Pest Control	One application controls grubs and other soil burrowing insects for several seasons. Two treatments may be needed to control grass damaging activities of chinch bugs		
Weed Control	Dandelions, plantain, buckhorn, vining weeds, practically all non-grass weeds — apply 4-XD with Scotts Spreader. On new lawns wait until after first cutting		
Crabgrass Control	A course of repeat Scutl treatments, on infested lawns, with the Scotts Spreader EARLY TO MID-SUMMER — As Crabgrass develops into branching and spreading growth — 4 SCUTL-ings at 5 to 7 day intervals LATE SUMMER — Apply to damp vegetation, 4 SCUTL-ings at normal rate or 2 at double rate. See directions in packages		
Outdoor Living	Get extra lawn pleasure. Chase out recurring invasions of chiggers and ants with Lawn and Turf Pest Control. Follow the Scott program to keep your turf healthy and green		

\*See Lawn Care No. 125 — "Choose Your Lawn Goal!"

### Hungry Trees and Shrubs

... Why hasn't someone told me before that Scotts Turf Builder was so good for feeding trees and shrubs? This is how I found out. My neighbor across the road has lilac and forsythia and flowering trees — like crab apple — which are the pride of our neighborhood. I just found out last season what makes them flourish: I saw him feeding them with your Turf Builder.

☐ We've tried. See Lawn Care 124.

Old-timers along the Eastern Seaboard think the past spring was about the wettest ever. As a result some lawns got out of hand, especially because they could not be mowed. Some of the coarser grasses grew particularly rank and required special attention in cutting to trim them down to size.

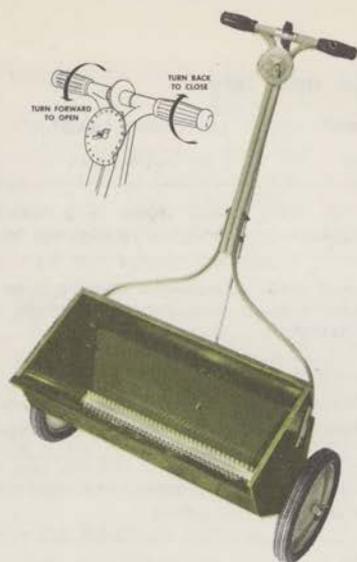
Some grass was torn up by birds that found extra reward in the soft soil — nice juicy fat grubs of the Jap beetle. The larvae were chewing grass roots near the soil surface earlier in the season than usual because the ground did not freeze to any depth. *Quick Henry* — Scotts Pest Control.

### Scutl Has Many Uses

1. Controls growing crabgrass
2. Pre-emergence (i.e. before sprouts appear) control of weeds and grasses if applied just before sprouting time
3. Controls the harmful activity of fungus diseases to grass
4. Improves color and vigor of desirable grass varieties
5. Repeated usage reduces growth of algae and moss and in some instances fleshy fungi such as toadstools

### Free Ride for Chiggers

According to one who has made a hobby of studying chiggers, they are transported from place to place on grasshoppers and similar migrating insects. Seems odd but maybe so. Anyway it is reported there are several broods of chiggers each year. Could it be they all hatch at once but have to wait their turn for transportation, like hitch hikers on a busy corner?



### Streamlined Spreaders

New streamlined models of Scotts Spreaders are now in production. They are more compact, lighter in weight, yet sturdier than ever.

A new agitator has been developed so the handy machine can now be used to spread lime quite evenly. Heretofore this has been difficult with the lawn-type distributors.

*Most lawns are just as well watered one time of day as another. The idea that it is bad to water grass in the hot sun bobs up repeatedly. Actually mid-day is a good time to water because it tends to cool the soil and the grass plants. This advice relates to turf only. It may be the wrong advice for watering flowers and vegetable crops.*

### Chlordane Caution

Chlordane is generally accepted as the best of modern insecticides for use on lawns. More and more people are using chlordane products for control of turf insects. Furthermore Chlordane is now being suggested for Crabgrass control. However, the results of our researches on clay and loam soils have indicated that excessive applications have a tendency to build up concentrations which are harmful to turf. The injury is of a delayed nature.

## Lawn Watering Not Expensive

To be able to answer inquiries as to the cost of watering lawns, we conducted a survey of water rates in different places. Our conclusion is that watering for the lawn is not costly. Where it is available, the generous use of water on the lawn can give more satisfaction in appearance and comfort than most any other summer expenditure.

Lawn Care holds no brief for water companies, public or private. But few who complain about the cost of water stop to consider that it's "cheaper than dirt". In a typical city, 1000 gallons is delivered wherever it is wanted for less than 50c. Amounts over the minimum drop to less than 25c per 1000 gallons. For instance our own town has what seems a very high rate. Even so, a large lawn of 10,000 square feet can have the equivalent of an inch of rain every week for three months at a cost of less than forty dollars.

*Here are typical rates that should enable you to estimate the cost of a dry summer's watering of your lawn — based on your local rate schedule.*

	Quarterly Minimum	Over Minimum	
		Per 1000 gal	10 ins water on 1000 sq ft
Wellesley Mass	\$2.40	\$0.29	\$1.82
New Haven Conn	3.00	0.26	1.63
Suburban N Y C	4.50	0.40	2.50
Philadelphia	2.65	0.09	0.56
Washington D C	2.75	0.18	1.13
Charlotte N C	2.50	0.26	1.63
Altoona Penna	2.50	0.26	1.63
Pittsburgh	3.40	0.34	2.13
Cleveland Ohio	1.50	0.10	.63
Columbus	5.10	0.23	1.44
Cincinnati	2.00	0.13	.81
Detroit	1.64	0.10	.63
Indianapolis	5.10	0.32	2.00
South Bend	3.00	0.24	1.50
Evansville	3.75	0.20	1.25
Winnetka Ill	2.50	0.28	1.75
Springfield, Ill	1.50	0.17	1.06
St Louis	2.25	0.20	1.25
Rochester Minn	4.00	0.20	1.25
Des Moines Iowa	2.00	0.26	1.63
Omaha Nebraska	3.00	0.19	1.19
Kansas City	5.25	0.37	2.32
Wichita Kansas	3.90	0.42	2.63

Suburban rates may be higher. Denver is one of a few cities where water is not metered. Lawn watering is included in the flat charge.

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