

# Lawn Care

*A discussion of the vital problems of lawn making and maintenance*

PUBLISHED SEVERAL TIMES YEARLY BY

O. M. SCOTT & SONS COMPANY - SEEDSMEN - MARYSVILLE, OHIO

Vol. III

September 1930

No. 5

## ANTS

### How to Rid Your Lawn of Them

A SEASON when the weather has been so unfavorable to the growth of grass appears to have been chosen by ANTS as an ideal time for their wholesale appearance. Letters by the scores have come into our office asking how ants might be most successfully relieved of "life and the pursuit of happiness."

The remedies herein described are not our own discoveries but the accepted extermination methods recommended by experiment stations and the vast army of golf course green keepers who have thousands of acres of fine turf under their watchful care. The burrows of ants may be fumigated or a poisoned bait used to feed them.

Carbon bisulphide and calcium cyanide are the two most generally used fumigants. If the burrows are so numerous as to form a mound it is suggested by one authority that holes be made in the mound about a foot apart by driving a stake an inch in diameter to a depth of ten or twelve inches. About one-fourth pint of carbon bisulphide is then poured into each hole and the opening plugged with soil. The entire mound should then be covered with a piece of old carpet or

burlap for twenty-four hours to prevent escape of the gas formed by the chemical.

Where the ants are not so numerous that they have formed mounds, carbon bisulphide may be injected into the openings by employing a mechanic's spring bottom oil can. About a teaspoonful of the fumigant should be squirted into each opening. The openings should be plugged with soil after the treatment so the fumes will be kept in.

Instead of carbon bisulphide one may use calcium cyanide provided the openings of the ant nests are enlarged. One teaspoonful should be used for each burrow. Care should be taken not to spill these chemicals over other lawn areas than those being treated. Injury to plants may result if the material comes in contact with the roots. Carbon bisulphide is both poisonous and inflammable and should be handled as such.

The poisonous bait idea may also be employed in the war on ants. This is the so-called government formula:

1. Dissolve 2 pounds (1000 grams) of sugar in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  gills of water, add 1/10 ounce (3 grams) of tartaric acid (crystals) boil for thirty minutes and cool.

2. Dissolve 1/10 ounce (3 grams) of sodium arsenate in 4 teaspoonfuls (20 c.c.) of hot water. Cool and add 3 1/3 ounces (100 grams) of honey.

Mix the two solutions together thoroughly. Small pieces of sponge, cotton



or wadded paper should then be saturated with the poison syrup and distributed where the ants work.

A more satisfactory plan, however, is to place the poison to the depth of a half inch in small covered cans, in the sides of which holes have been punched from the inside out with a ten-penny nail, about an inch from the bottom. A piece of sponge, cotton or paper placed in the can will prevent the ants from drowning in the syrup. This poison is not strong enough to kill the ants immediately but they will carry it away to the nests and feed it to the queen and the young, thus destroying the entire colony.

This and the other treatments suggested will be found most successful during warm, sunny weather when the ants are most active.

It is interesting to know how ants injure grass. The galleries which they form in the soil disturb plant roots and the earthen mounds which they build cover low growing plants. Some species carry away germinating seeds and still others are indirectly injurious because they protect certain plant pests such as bugs and insects. Ants' nests make very unsightly spots in lawns. It is useless to resow such spots with seed until the ants have been killed. These areas should then be raked thoroughly, new soil scattered over them, the ground fertilized and re-seeded.

Two simple treatments which are sometimes successful involve the use of coal oil and Paris green.

Coal oil cannot be used on the lawn as it will kill the grass. However, in drives or other places without vegetation, a little coal oil poured into the holes will usually kill the ant colony.

Paris green mixed in equal proportions with brown sugar will often destroy a colony as the ants will carry the poison to their nests and feed it to the young.

As in the treatment of all lawn pests, we shall be glad to have the comments and experiences of any who have used various ant killing remedies and formed some opinion on the subject. There are, of course, some commercial remedies on the market, obtainable usually in drug stores.



## Ant Extermination

"I HAVE tried all kinds of things for ants on clay courts where I could get at them with Carbon Bisulphide, Gasoline, Coal Oil, Boiling Water, etc. Waste of time. The simplest and best method yet is to *mix thoroughly* Tartar Emetic (poison) 1 part to ten parts of powdered sugar (fruit sugar). Sprinkle a little anywhere where the ants are working at any time when the ground is dry. Repeat for a day or two where some nests have been missed. I generally keep it in a can and just drop a pinch or two as I walk along near the ant heaps. The ants soon carry it away and don't return."

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## Leaves for Protection

MR. ROBERT RAMSEY, of New York City, asked us recently what we thought of allowing leaves that had fallen, to remain on the grass over the winter. Our advice was to rake or sweep the leaves off when dry. Wet leaves mat so tightly that they keep air from getting to the grass and it is apt to be smothered out. Such a covering would be especially bad for new grass and it was a brand new lawn Mr. Ramsey was making. It takes leaves so long to decompose that no fertilizing benefit could possibly result simply by allowing the leaves to remain on the grass through the winter months.