

Lawn Care

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

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YELLOW TREFOIL

MOST weeds have flourished this season but Yellow Trefoil or Black Medick has outdone itself. Specimens of this weed have come in for identification from almost every northern state and we are informed by several experiment stations that they have had the same experience. One authority says: "Yellow Trefoil seems to be prevalent all over the country this season. In 1928 we noticed it growing in our golf fairways and this is the first year since that time it has put in its appearance."

Once Used in Lawn Mixtures

While Trefoil is not considered a noxious weed it doesn't belong in a lawn. Yet it is surprising to learn that Trefoil seed has in years past been used in lawn mixtures as a substitute for White Clover. Perhaps that is where this weed got its first start in lawns. At present it is found most frequently in the seed of farm crops such as Alfalfa, Sweet Clover and Red Clover. Stock does not object to it so on the farm Trefoil causes very little concern.

Yellow Blossom Easy Identification

The illustration is handicapped because of not being able to show the small clover-shaped yellow blossoms. They make this weed very easy to identify. Trefoil is a member of the clover family and the small blossom, except

for the color, is a miniature of White Clover. It is an annual and would be easy to destroy before the plants go to seed except that they grow very close on the ground and the mower is apt to miss them. Its range is throughout the world in all temperate climates. The plant itself branches out and spreads in creeping fashion. The leaves are finely haired, rounded and slightly toothed at the tips.



YELLOW TREFOIL
(*Medicago lupulina*, L.)

The pods containing the seeds are thin skinned, kidney shaped and slightly twisted. Each pod contains just one seed.

Seeds Resemble Alfalfa

The seeds themselves are yellow and very much resemble alfalfa and sweet clover seeds. When found in these seeds

it is very difficult to remove as well as to recognize. We recall having once seen an almost perfect stand of Trefoil in an athletic field which had shortly before been sowed with a grass mixture. There was no accounting for the weed because Trefoil seed is not found in the grasses. Later it was discovered that several inches of topsoil had been brought in from bottom ground along a river. This soil was fairly alive with the seeds of Trefoil. They needed only cultivation to arouse them to activity.

Accounting for Present Prevalence

One of the best known seed analysts in the country volunteers this comment:

"I think likely soil conditions may have had something to do with its development. Undoubtedly the lack of moisture affects Trefoil and makes it more noticeable, because other grasses die out and this plant, having a deeper rootstalk, subsists. We have had an insufficient amount of rainfall the past five years. The plant may therefore have had an advantage over less deeply rooted plants and has obtained a good foothold. We have noticed the increase in the growth of this weed in lawns of this area" [New Jersey].

Methods of Control

A large area badly infested with Trefoil should be rebuilt or, if there is no objection to White Clover, a heavy seeding of it will usually crowd the Trefoil out. When once discouraged by the crowding method, other grasses may be introduced since clover is not liked by many good lawn enthusiasts. Small patches of Trefoil may be removed by hand when the ground is wet. This should not be delayed until after the

plants have gone to seed. Cornell University, in one of its bulletins, advocates killing Trefoil by spraying with an iron sulphate solution, the same as for Dandelions. Dissolve 4 pounds of this chemical in 5 to 10 gallons of water and apply this solution to 1000 square feet of turf infested with Yellow Trefoil. *For further information about the use of iron sulphate see Lawn Care Number 6 for August 1929.*

Because Trefoil is not unsightly it is sometimes disregarded in a lawn until it becomes so widespread that its eradication is a serious problem. We advise being on the lookout for this weed and suppressing it before it becomes too ambitious.

Dig Plantain Now

We are indebted to Mr. G. A. Helgert, of Milwaukee, for this timely thought: "During the month of August [and we imagine September, too] Plantain is very loosely anchored and can be easily pulled out by hand." However, the seed heads should be cut off during the summer to prevent new plants starting.

Fall Planting Best

"My man-of-all-work evidently seized the psychological moment for planting the seed received from you the last of August. Within five days after planting there was a beautiful green velvet with an inch pile where bare ground had been. Now it is several inches long and brilliant green in color. I am hoping I have converted the man to fall planting."—Dr. Hope Sherman, 2915 Coleridge Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

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