

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. V

March-April 1932

No. 2

QUACK-GRASS

A Die Hard

A VOTE among the farming populace on the most undesirable weed would likely result in a big majority for Quack-grass. And yet this same pest makes fine hay, excellent pasture, and is unsurpassed as a sod-binder. The great objection is, it cannot be controlled. The tenacious, fibrous roots joint frequently and are very difficult to destroy. Quack-grass simply will not stay in its place; consequently we find it classified as a most damaging weed, rather than a desirable grass.

CONSIDERED FOR
AIRPORTS.

As a possible cover for airports, Quack-grass gained some prominence a few years ago. Its toughness and resistance to adversity in general led certain airport engineers to regard Quack-grass as the ideal cover for landing fields. Such recommendations were unfortunately made before it was real-

ized that seed of this species was not commercially available. Furthermore, the farms adjacent to ports with a quack-grass covering would soon be overrun with this ruinous pest. It was just another good idea with no hope of fruition.



QUACK-GRASS
(*Agropyron repens*)

Also called Couch-grass, Wheat-grass, Twitch-grass, Dog-grass, Devils-grass. A perennial which propagates by seeds and creeping rootstalks.

OFTEN MISTAKEN
FOR GOOD GRASS.

When Quack-grass appears in a lawn it may be at first mistaken for a satisfactory newcomer even though the blades are a bit wider than lawn grasses and the color an ashy green. The leaves are rough on top and smooth underneath. When the plant goes to seed it resembles the head of wheat. It is readily distinguishable, however, because the spikelets containing the seeds alternate on the stems as shown in the illustration.

THREE METHODS OF
DESTRUCTION.

Quack-grass in lawn areas may be combated by three methods—cultivation, by the use of chemicals, and by smothering with an airtight covering such as tar paper.

1. *Cultivating* by starving the roots of Quack-grass through frequent and close cutting, followed by plowing and harrowing, will usually destroy the plants. This process should be started some time in advance of seeding, however. Time should be allowed for the grass to green-up again after which the harrowing (with sharp teeth) should be repeated. If a new lawn is to be started in the fall the plowing should be done in June. There should be no doubt as to the thoroughness with which the Quack-grass has been annihilated for it is almost certain to show up again when the lawn is built, for a single root stalk can re-infest it.

2. *Killing with Chemicals.* The most commonly used chemical is Sodium Chlorate which we have heretofore recommended in the control of other weeds. The difference here is that enough must be used to kill all vegetation. There is no hope of killing the Quack-grass without killing the other grass too. For application to this pest Sodium Chlorate should be made into solution at the rate of 1 pound in a gallon of water. The Sodium Chlorate crystals may be put in a burlap sack and suspended in the top of the proper amount of water. It will dissolve in from one to two hours. In June a single spraying may do the work, but usually two or three are necessary to kill all the plants. Summer and fall spraying of Quack-grass have proven especially successful.

The soil is not productive immediately after Sodium Chlorate has been used. If put on in early summer and then followed with a heavy application of lime (as much as 500 pounds per 1000 square feet) the ground can be safely seeded to new grass in September. When Quack-grass is killed in the fall, seeding may be done the following spring.

CAUTION!

In a previous issue of *LAWN CARE* (February 1930) we called attention to the danger of allowing Sodium Chlorate to come in contact with certain organic material, under which conditions it becomes explosive. The Ohio Experiment Station has issued very specific directions with reference to the handling of this chemical. Sodium Chlorate itself cannot be burned or exploded, but when it is mixed with, or comes in contact with combustible material such as sulphur, leather, starch, wood, straw, cotton or any other plant product it causes an explosion if struck, or burns very rapidly if ignited.

Potassium Chlorate is an important ingredient of match heads and Sodium Chlorate can be used for the same purpose.

It is well to observe these precautions in the handling of Sodium Chlorate.

1. Use metal containers.
2. Wear rubber boots when spraying.
3. Do not use matches around spray clothing that has dried out.
4. Wash thoroughly or destroy all clothing or sacks that have become soaked with the solution.
5. Always store or carry Sodium Chlorate in tight metal or glass containers, not in cloth or paper sacks.
6. Keep Sodium Chlorate tightly covered to prevent foreign matter from getting in.
7. Keep Sodium Chlorate away from children as you would any other dangerous material.
8. Make up Sodium Chlorate solution out of doors.

Sodium Chlorate is more readily obtainable than the other suitable chlorates such as Calcium and Magnesium which are also usable in Quack-grass killing.

These are not inflammable although they are seldom as easily procurable and are considerably higher in price. Sodium Chlorate should be obtainable at about 10c per pound in quantity.

3. *Smothering.* It is the Quack-grass roots which make this pest so mischievous. They obtain their nourishment from the above surface growth. Consequently the plants can be destroyed if the food supply is cut off. In very small areas by covering with boards, tar paper, or spreading a thick blanket of manure or straw over the ground to exclude the air, the plants will in two or three months time be left withered and dead.

It becomes quite obvious that Quack-grass is a tough "animal." We caution against trying to start a new lawn on ground where this pest is at large. Kill it first and spare the necessity of later ruining your grass to do it.

QUACK MEETS QUACK.

We had never heard it intimated that there was any relationship between Quack-grass and the dialect of the duck family. But Carl L. Sherwood of Detroit, Michigan, recites the following experience:

"Our garden is rectangular and runs north and south. The Quack-grass seemed to be coming in upon us from the east and south sides. It finally got the best of us and choked out our currant bushes. Even the strawberry bed was destroyed. We pulled out the grass by the roots but whenever we broke off a root a dozen new ones seemed to appear. Finally we bought three wild ducks, fenced off the south end of the garden and put said ducks in the enclosure. It was fun to see them go after the Quack-



grass. They would start at the top and follow the stem to the end of the roots. They liked the fresh tender roots and did not leave a particle in the ground. When they had done a thorough job we moved the fence and provided fresh pasture. I don't know whether the grass gets its name from the duck, or the ducks get their name from the grass, but if you will follow this suggestion, there will be just one kind of quack left."

So, according to Mr. Sherwood, a fourth method of combating Quack-grass is *ducks*.



Gas For Dandelions

"THERE is one simple cure I would like to add to this list. I feel this could well replace all other remedies. Use a cheap grade of gasoline; apply this with an ordinary hand oil can to the crown of the plant. In twenty-four hours you will find Mr. Dandelion has gone where all good dandelions go. There will be no more sprouting. If there should be a nice long juicy flower stem just pluck this off, otherwise there will be enough sap to mature the seeds. Short stems, don't bother. No cutting or other trouble, just squirt on a little cheap gasoline. This same treatment will kill any weed—or plant. A tiny spot of bluegrass may be killed once in a while, this could not be found in a week. Digging tears up the lawn and also kills a spot of grass by removing it."—ROY L. ISHAM, 101 S. Allen, Chanute, Kans.

This method of fighting Dandelions was mentioned in February 1929 *LAWN CARE*. We agree with Mr. Isham that it is probably the most effective means of warfare. Some years ago we offered for sale a Dandelion Killer made of brass and equipped with a plunger and valve which would inject about a teaspoonful of gasoline into the root of the plant. The chamber itself with a screw-cap



would hold about a pint of fluid. The weakest feature of these "killers" was the valve which had the habit of refusing to function after it had been used for a few months. Some of our friends may still have these instruments in use. If so we should like to know whether or not they are still working. We have always lived in hopes that someone of an inventive turn of mind would devise a dandelion destroyer embodying this principle and able to survive at least a dozen seasons of hard usage.

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Bent Lawns

MORE than half of our customers have been introduced to us through the magic words "Creeping Bent." To the golfers they signify velvet-like greens and to many lovers of fine lawns they mean the *most beautiful of all turf grasses*. Creeping Bent as it may be had in seed form appears in our lawn mixtures, but we are referring now to the vegetative method of planting where Stolons rather than seed are used.

In 1922 we published the first edition of our booklet "Bent Lawns." In each succeeding year many changes have been made in the contents for grass culture is never at a standstill. Something new is always being learned. The latest story of Creeping Bent will be found in our 1932 edition. You may have a copy for the asking.

Scott's Creeping Bent is the subject of a four color page advertisement appearing in the February issue of BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS.

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When You Send a Weed

IF you wish to mail us a weed or grass specimen for identification please moisten slightly and wrap in wax paper. This insures our receiving the specimen in its original freshness.

At Last—A Lawn

"I have been told frequently that my lawn is the best looking in this section of Virginia. This is the first time that I have used your seed and Turf Builder, but in the future I propose to use none other."—FRANK J. GILLIAM, Department of English, Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Va.

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Scott Publications

Lawns, a small booklet of condensed facts about the making of a new lawn and the improving of an old one.

Bent Lawns, an illustrated booklet which tells how to make and maintain a Creeping Bent Lawn.

Converting to Creeping Bent, a folder which explains four methods of remaking and improving an old lawn by using Bent.

Lawn Making and Maintenance. Sixty pages of specific information that will be especially helpful in the building or care of large lawn areas.

The Putting Green. An illustrated book telling how to construct and maintain grass greens. Gratis to greens chairmen, greenkeepers, or any golf club officers. To others at actual cost of 25 cents.

There have been nineteen previous issues of Lawn Care and the following lawn pests have been discussed: Plantain, Crab Grass, Dandelions, Moss, Grubs and Beetles, Chickweed, Buckhorn, Ground Ivy, Yarrow, Earthworms, Heal-all, Ants, Speedwell, Creeping Buttercup, Sod Web-Worms, Moles, Knot Grass and Sorrel.

Binders for Lawn Care, made of imitation leather and capable of holding the next ten years' bulletins, are furnished at actual cost of 50c, postage paid. Each binder sent out contains a complete set of LAWN CARE bulletins.