

Lawns

For Everything There Is a Season

By ALBERT GEYSSENS

COLOR IT GREEN?

Not that simple. A good looking turf, whether new or established requires proper procedure (hard work).

If you are establishing a new lawn here are a few basic DOs:

1. Be sure area is properly graded.
2. Have sufficient top soil (we recommend 4")
3. Correct fertilizer to make your soil right for proper seed germination and growth. (To be sure, have your soil analyzed).
4. Use the correct blend of seed for the area (sunny or shady-wet or dry). There is one for each situation.

The above should be followed with one big don't and that is: Don't assume that this seed will just take care of itself with no more effort on your part. Repeated fertilizing and proper moisture, maintained especially as soil dries out, are necessary.

Established lawns require renovating at this time, providing soil is not too wet, either by hard raking or thatching to remove under thatch, dead leaves, debris, etc. before applying either fertilizer or seed. Again if you have not had desirable results with the fertilizer you have been using, perhaps it is not correct for your particular soil. This is where a soil analysis is a good idea. It leaves no room for error which in turn means a waste of money and time.

WEED PROBLEMS

If you had any crabgrass in 1974, you will have more in 1975, unless you apply a pre-emergent crabgrass control now, before the seeds which are in your soil from last year have a chance to germinate. There are two formulas of pre-emergent control, one with which immediate seeding can be done or for new lawns — the other is for established lawns where no new seeding is used. It's really a simple program. Middle May apply Broad Leaf Weed Killer and again in the Fall (further mention is made on this below).

INFESTATION PROBLEMS

As for lawn insect infestation, keep a close watch this year for dead spots appearing in the lawn during months of April and May. If you did not grubproof in August or September 1974, it should be done now! These dead spots could be caused by the European Chafer grub, which feeds lightly in shaded areas of the lawn and heavily in sunny spots. An over abundance of starlings and black birds on your lawn, or visitations by moles and skunks, are a pre-warning of problems ahead.

For control use Arthro-Ban (Dursban) or Spectracide (Diazinon) as advised. Repeat treatment in August or September to control new hatching. Starting June through August be on the alert for sod webworm and bluegrass billbug. Same chemicals are advised for control, following directions for application.

MOWING

Improper mowing is the major cause of many lawn problems. Grass cut too short during the hot droughty summer becomes unhealthy, as it is less able to manufacture food. Cutting with a dull mower rips and shreds the leaf blade, retarding growth and providing a lodging for fungus

and disease spores. Grass allowed to grow too long becomes coarse and bleached out when mowed to proper height. Also grass allowed to remain too long for over-wintering invites snow mold and other fungus problems. In all of these situations the grass plants fade away leaving bare areas soon to be filled with weeds.

The proper cutting height for bluegrass and bluegrass-fescue lawns is 1 3/4" to 2 1/2". This can be maintained by regular weekly mowing, except in early Spring or Fall or during periods of good growing weather. During these periods a lawn should be cut more often. Never allow grass to grow longer than 1/3 the desired length before mowing. The only exception to this rule is your last cutting in late Fall, when grass then should be cut to about 1" to 1 1/2" height before the first snow.

Late Fall is also the time for a top dressing with either soil or humus (Peat) or processed cattle

manure. At this time you can smooth out any bumps or hollows you may have noticed when mowing the lawn during the past summer. Home gardeners some times have trouble locating a reliable source of topsoil. Black earth dug out of the woods is often sold as topsoil. DO NOT buy it, for it is practically worthless. The tree under whose branches the soil has been dug has spent hundreds of years robbing it of its plant nutrients and energy. In many cases "fly-by-night" operators have actually used soil and colored it with lamp black, then sold it for first class topsoil. The color of soil has no bearing whatsoever on its quality. The best soil to use for repair jobs is one of the commercial soil mixtures sold at your nursery or garden center. It may cost a little more, but you will be sure you are buying first class topsoil which will produce results. In using humus or top soil, you will need about five bushels per 1000 sq. ft. of lawn. Spread it evenly over the lawn, then rake it in. In leveling out bumps and hollows you can

use up to 1" of soil without smothering the grass. Another way is to rake up the sod carefully in the hollow, replace enough soil to fill up the low spot and then replace the sod.

Late Summer and Fall is one of the best times to use WEED KILLER on your lawn. Weeds are growing actively at this time and are very easy to kill. A word of caution, however, on the use of weed killer! Remember these materials will also kill shrubs, evergreens and trees. DO NOT apply on a windy day, stay away from root zones of all trees and shrubs. CHECK with your nurseryman as to the correct type of weed killer to use.

Fall is also the best time of the year to apply fungicides for control of Snow Mold, Powder Mildews and other fungi that grasses are subject to. Again check as to the correct type and timing for these products.

It is also the best time of the entire year for application of soil insect or grub control. The grub is

in a young larval stage and nearer the surface, consequently most vulnerable to the control measure prescribed.

FERTILIZING

Frequency of fertilization depends on individual soil conditions and your standard of excellence in lawn appearance. However, if a good-looking lawn is your standard, three to five feedings per year should do the job. Apply fertilizers evenly on your lawn to avoid light and dark streaks. If you use natural, organic fertilizers, they can be applied any season without the danger of burning. Your FALL FEEDING is the most IMPORTANT one of the entire year if only feeding once. As mentioned before, use a high phosphorous fertilizer as those high in nitrogen over-stimulate top growth, which in turn increase the fungus problems.

Every area has its own problems and these are best handled and understood by your local garden store operator or nurseryman.



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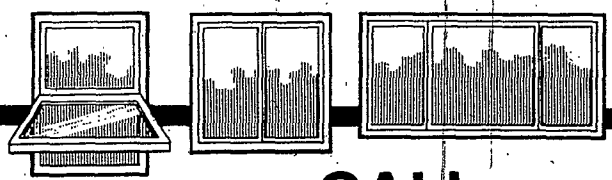
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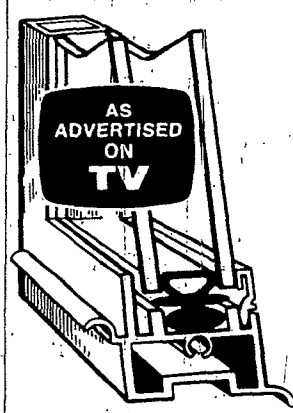
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