Storing Topsoil

Q. A club where a friend of mine is one of the directors has a good supply of topsoil for use now and when required. The problem is how to properly store the topsoil so it will keep its character and not deteriorate from rain or moisture, sun, dust or other elements. It has been suggested that it can be stored under polyethylene sheeting or, possibly, rubber-coated sheeting. What do you recommend? (Rhode Island)

A. The best way to store the topsoil is to leave it out doors in the wind, rain and sun, covered with live growing vegetation. Pile it as you wish, then follow the pattern established by the Pennsylvania Highway dept. Apply lime, if needed, then fertilize with 5-10-10 at 1,000 lbs. to the acre (25 pounds to 1,000 sq. ft.) Sow a mixture of 40 lbs. of ryegrass and 40 lbs. of inoculated Penngift crown vetch seed to the acre.

Cover with a light straw mulch, one ton to the acre, and go away and let Nature take care of it. No mowing will be required. If a few large weeds grow up, cut them off with a sickle. The crown vetch will take over the weeds and will keep the topsoil in a loamy, crumbly condition, ready for instant use.

The piles of topsoil could be covered with poly sheeting but there would seem to be no advantage except that the soil would be dry whenever needed. The vegetative covering offers the greatest advantage.

Grass Requiring Less Care

Q. I have maintained about 14,000 sq. ft. of Washington bent for the past 20 years or so. It requires close attention and prevents me from making summer trips of very long duration. I have decided to go into some other lawn grass that would be beautiful and, at the same time, would not require as much attention and give me as much grief as the bent. In making this change I'd like to know what kind of grass to plant. We live in south-central Minn. and have good sandy loam with clay sub-soil. I presume it would be well to make the change in Sept. and remove all the bent sod. About how deep would you suggest we cut the sod? (Minnesota)

A. I can think of no combination that would be more suited to your conditions and to your climate than a mixture of Pennlawn creeping red fescue (70 per cent), Merion blue (30 per cent). This mixture should be seeded at the rate of 2 to 2 1/2 lbs. to 1,000 sq. ft.

Yes, the bent sod should be stripped and removed. I would suggest cutting it about one inch thick. If the grade of the lawn is exactly the way you want it, I doubt if I would do any seedbed preparation beyond going over it...