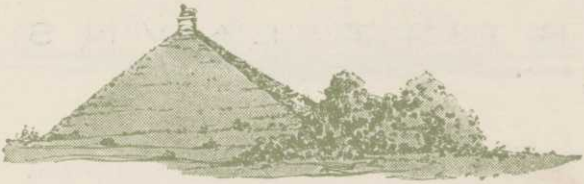
Bent Lawns

THE estate of Mr. Owen D. Young, (President General Electric Company) Van Hornsville, New York, has been chosen as the cover illustration for two reasons. The house itself radiates a homelike atmosphere. The other reason is that the beautiful lawn stretching out to meet you, was sowed with Scott's Seed.

Bent Lawns



PREFACE

GRASS has the gifted power of being able to put forever out of view unsightliness and devastation. It replaces havoc with harmony; hostility with hospitality.

Near the little Belgian town of Waterloo, one may find thrown over a gigantic heap of cannons and battlefield debris, a covering of beautiful green. On the more recently devastated areas of Europe, as time goes on, the shot-riddled soil will disappear under a green mantle appropriately burying the past.

But grass is not merely a hiding garment. What boy or girl does not owe much of the pleasure of youth to big homey lawns? The children of any neighborhood flock eagerly to the expanse of soft green grass that offers the best opportunity for play.

Is it not worth while then to lay even more emphasis than we do on good grass growing? This booklet is dedicated to that belief. Its mission is to carry the latest and the best in lawn-making to those who have already come to realize what an exalted place in home life fine lawns should occupy.

BENT LAWNS

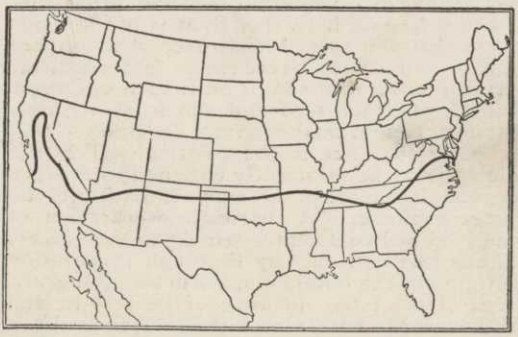
THE BENT DEBUT

THE changes of style in dress, motor cars and architecture are taken as a matter of course. They are indications of progress. But style changes in lawns! Who ever heard of such a thing? Regardless of how unreasonable it seems, we are now upon the eve of a rather startling revolution in good lawn-making. In a sense, golf is responsible. Since the game was brought to this country, the maintaining of fine turf has become an art. The building of Putting Greens has been brought to perfection. In this development one grass has become recognized as combining in remarkable fashion the most desirable qualities. This is *Bent*. It is only natural that as the knowledge of Bent and its habits became more general, golf players ambitious to have lawns like putting greens began to try this unusual grass. So the idea has spread generally, throughout all Northern States. As in the case of anything new there are many misconceptions. There are several different strains and two distinct methods of planting. In this booklet we are endeavoring to present the subject in a clear and concise way so that anyone who wishes to make a Bent lawn can proceed without misgiving.

WHERE BENT WILL GROW

It is unfortunate that Bent will not grow satisfactorily under every condition of climate. Experiments have proven that south of latitude 38°, or roughly south of the black line shown on the map, it is unwise to risk the planting of this grass. There are some exceptions. For example, in the mountainous regions of North Carolina and Tennessee, where there is sufficient rain fall during the summer

months and there is no prolonged hot, dry, season, good results have been obtained with both Stolons and seed. The same applies to sections where nearness to the ocean makes grass growing conditions more favorable than inland points with the same latitude. Generally speaking, however, the typical southern grasses cost less and will produce a more lasting turf in the southern states than Bent.



South of the black line it is practically impossible to utilize Bent. The one exception is mountainous regions where conditions are much the same as in the northern states.

METHODS OF PLANTING

There are two means by which Bent may be planted. You may sow Bent seed of which there are many strains, or you may plant Creeping Bent Stolons. (The term *Stolons* is explained on page 10.) We shall be glad to point out to any one interested the difference between the various strains of Bent obtainable in seed form. Here it seems necessary to simply say that pure Creeping Bent *Seed* unmixed with other strains such as Rhode Island or Velvet Bent is not obtainable. This is the

primary reason for the *vegetative* method of planting which pertains to the use of Stolons. It is by this means alone that Creeping Bent turf can be produced.

PREPARING THE GROUND

Regardless of whether you use Creeping Bent Stolons or seed in planting, practically the same soil preparation is required.

Let it be said here that Bent is not a magic grass that will spread itself over impoverished soil in unending verdancy. Unfortunately many persons will sow it with such optimism. But the best of seed and the most vigorous Stolons cannot make up for neglect in soil preparation. Yet if the existing soil is not ideal it may be sufficiently enriched to produce a good lawn. Says an eminent authority on grass growing: "A thorough preparation of the seed bed contributes largely to the success of the turf and only by thorough preparation is it possible to obtain a uniform stand of grass, regardless of the quantity of seed sown and the evenness with which it is distributed."

The surface soil, which should be reasonably rich to a depth of two or three inches, ought to be well fined but not compacted. Barnyard manure is excellent for enriching but it should be used only when well rotted so as to be free from weed seeds. When pulverized, manure will not interfere with the evenness of the seed bed. If commercial fertilizer is used it may be applied just before the last fining which precedes the sowing of the seeds. This insures thorough incorporation with the surface soil.

New grass will be stimulated and the weeds kept down more effectively if Ammonium Sulphate is added when the ground is prepared. Ten pounds per thousand square feet may be safely used if a week or more is allowed to elapse before the actual planting is started. A

light sprinkling, after the application is made, will help to carry the fertilizer into the soil.

TIME OF PLANTING

Creeping Bent Stolons may be planted and Bent seed sowed any time from early spring until late fall. From August 15th to the last of September in the latitude of Ohio is ideal. Nevertheless planting can be successfully done any time the ground is in condition to be worked from April to November. Late plantings make very little headway during the winter, but get an early start in the spring. Plantings of mid-summer must be kept well watered for there is naturally greater danger of drouth then. If seed is sowed or Stolons planted in the spring the grass must compete with a heavy growth of spring weeds and about the time it gets a good start it is retarded and often badly injured by the hot, dry weather of mid-summer. On the other hand, grass sown in the fall, or at the beginning of cool weather, shows a tendency to form stools, rather than tall, slender plants. In parts of New York and the New England states spring seeding is preferred largely because of the effect of severe winters on young grass.

Detroit, Mich.

My lawn planted last year with Creeping Bent Stolons is now showing up wonderfully well, and we played croquet on it with much satisfaction. The lawn also is free from weeds and our dear old gardener is perfectly delighted to fuss with this wonderful grass. Sincerely yours,

J. T. La Measure.

Planting Creeping Bent Stolons

In the preceding pages the term *Stolon* was used. A Stolon is a Creeping Bent runner upon which there appears at intervals of every one and one-half or two inches a joint or node. Creeping Bent spreads by means of runners which start at these joints, thus forming a succession of new plants. This briefly is the principle back of vegetative planting. The idea is as old as written history. Sugar cane for centuries has been planted by this method. Of the grasses, however, there are comparatively few adapted to vegetative planting.

GETTING READY TO PLANT

Instructions for soil preparation were given on page 8. Remember, however, that after the Stolons have been planted they require a light covering with compost or top soil. A quantity of good dirt should, therefore, be held in reserve for that purpose.

Planting Bent by the Vegetative Method.

PLANTING

In preparation for planting, Creeping Bent Stolons are chopped in a shredder. These cuttings are shipped in burlap bags ready to

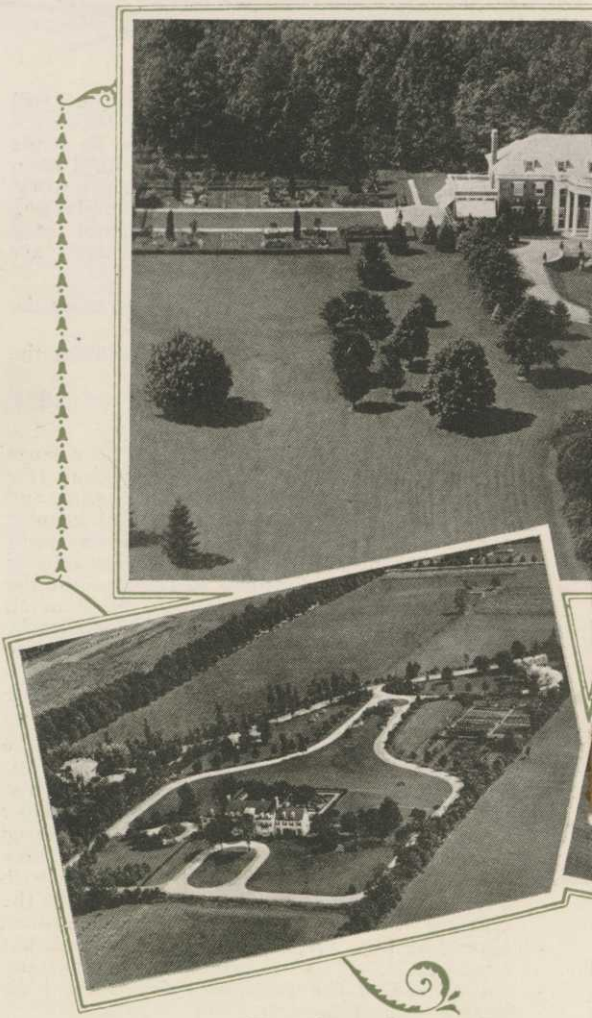
be planted. The lengths of the blades will average about three inches or less.

The planting of Stolons need not be made a laborious task. To plant a good sized lawn there should be three persons to do the work. This makes it possible to complete the planting quickly and efficiently, an important step toward successful results. Four things are necessary:

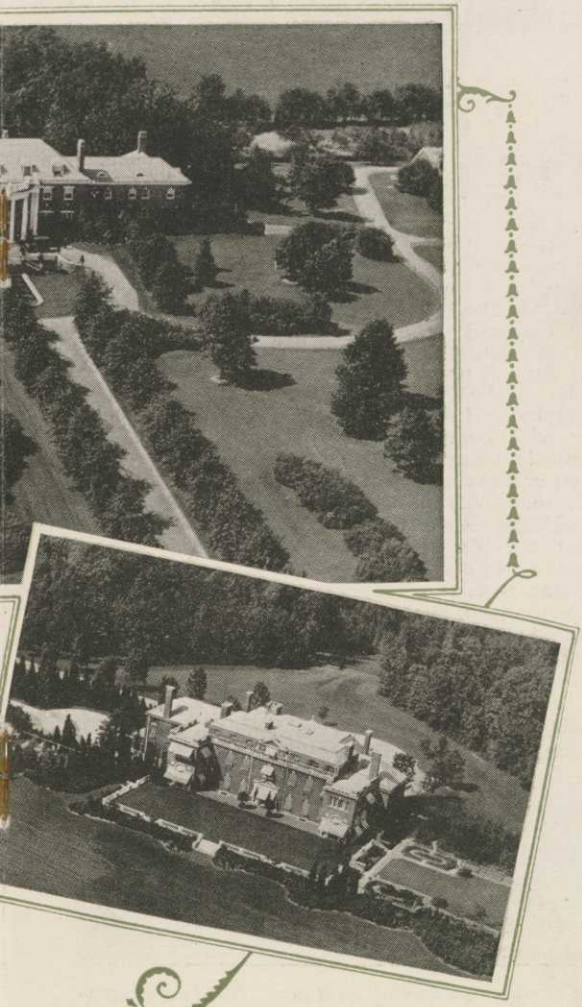
1. Sufficient screened top soil for covering the Stolons after spreading.
2. Ordinary 12-quart buckets for handling the top soil and Stolons.
3. A hose with a spray nozzle for sprinkling.
4. A roller.

The following will also be useful on a large job: A wheelbarrow, planks for crossing (*the planted area should not be disturbed*) twine and sticks for marking off sections, and regular garden tools. Everything should be in readiness before the work is started, especially if the planting is to be done in the heat of the day when chopped grass must be handled speedily to prevent drying. Three men working steadily ought to plant ten or twelve thousand square feet per day.

Scatter the chopped Stolons evenly over the ground, roll lightly and cover with not more than one-fourth of an inch of compost, preferably less, and in such a way as not to disturb the even distribution of the grass. Then roll the planted area so that dirt will be pressed around the Stolons. Watering should follow immediately. The water must be applied with a fine spray nozzle in such a manner that the cuttings will not be disarranged. The ground should be kept moist until a good growth has been made. This is exceedingly important, for otherwise the grass will dry up and die before it can take root.



Three New England estates that owe mu
green turf produced with Scott's Seed
Lewis & Valentine, Landscape



uch of their attractiveness to beautiful
d. (Photos through the courtesy of
Architects, New York City.)

SUBSEQUENT TREATMENT

DURING the growing months, it is well to top dress with screened compost or rich dirt twice per year. This of course is not absolutely essential. One cubic yard of compost is enough to cover from three to five thousand square feet for a single application. Reference was made on a previous page to the use of Ammonium Sulphate. This treatment of Creeping Bent turf is especially desirable. If the original planting is done near the last of August or the early part of September, the first sulphating can follow a month later. The Sulphate of Ammonia may be mixed thoroughly with compost before applying or as previously suggested, may be used five pounds to ten gallons of water. Applications should not be made during a very hot, dry period. The evidence is in favor of close and frequent cutting. By such treatment the grass spreads more rapidly and becomes finer in texture. Some weeds will appear if there are any in the ground or top dressing material. These should be pulled at once and not allowed to impede the growth of the Bent.

A Section of Creeping Bent turf. Notice how completely the ground is covered.

THE COMPOST HEAP

THE successful greenkeeper of a golf course would not be without his compost pile, and to properly maintain a fine lawn whether it be a Bent lawn or a mixture of native grasses, a supply of compost is amply justified. We refer to a pile of various humus-forming and fertilizing materials spread in layers about six inches thick and left to decay and undergo chemical modification. It may include in its composition almost any decomposing vegetative matter such as earth, barnyard manure, leaf-mold and sod, together with rich soil and sand.

Composting is a valuable process, producing a humus material very beneficial to the soil. If a good manure compost is used in spring and fall, nothing else may be found necessary, except, possibly, an occasional application of Nitrate of Soda or Sulphate of Ammonia as a quick stimulator.

The pile should be built under cover if possible, the various materials being laid in alternating layers of four or six inches. It is well to break the pile down vertically and thoroughly mix several times during the composting period. The compost is then sifted through a screen and the coarse material saved for the next time. The composting process should continue at least six months before use, but a year is better, so that all the weeds will be killed. As the compost pile is worked, new material can be added from time to time.

It is very common for lawns to consist of heavy clay soil and to improve this condition, the compost pile should contain a liberal amount of sand or sandy loam. The practical value of a compost heap is this: It provides a constant supply of rich top dressing and Bent lawns in particular are benefited by such treatment.

BENT LAWNS

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS OF BENT

IN all fairness to those who undertake to make Bent lawns, it should be said that it is not a fool-proof grass, and not one which will push everything else out of its path. Beyond all doubt Bent will produce thicker turf than other grasses, meaning that it offers greater resistance to weeds. It will not crowd out Crab Grass or Poa Annua if they are once established, but owing to the density of the turf, these and other undesirables have less chance of gaining a foothold.

UNCONTROLLABLE

The question is often asked if Creeping Bent ever gets beyond control. It does not. The tendency for it is to become thicker and thicker with age, but it never extends itself over adjoining areas or garden plots to become a pest. Practically all golf course putting greens are now planted with Bent by the vegetative method. If given reasonable care, Creeping Bent produces a thick, velvety turf from which weeds are kept more successfully than from other grass.

NO SPECIAL MOWER NECESSARY

There is an almost general misunderstanding about the mowing of Creeping Bent. No special equipment is necessary. An ordinary mower will be entirely satisfactory. It is a good plan, but not essential, to set the knives low.

GOOD FOR SHADE

Creeping Bent when planted by the vegetative method will endure shade more successfully than ordinary grasses. Grass produced from Bent seed however is not so lasting. Where seeding is preferred to vegetative planting we advise the use of Scott's Shady Mixture. (See page 21.)

TERRACES

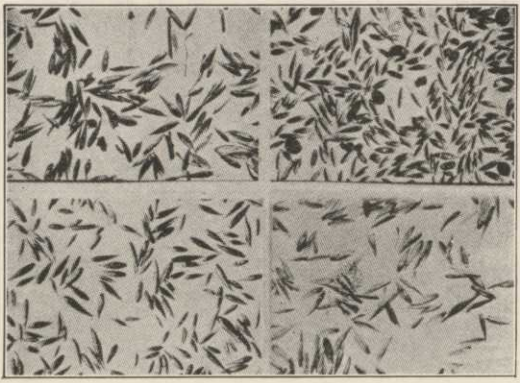
Creeping Bent is at a particular disadvantage on a terrace. The very nature of planting which calls for top dressing and frequent watering makes it extremely difficult to plant Bent on a slope and prevent washing. Terraces may be sodded with Bent turf, but there is no outstanding advantage in its use over Blue Grass sod which is more readily and more cheaply obtainable.

It is difficult to write a booklet which will offer a solution for every grass growing problem. This brief discussion of the planting of Creeping Bent Stolons may leave many unanswered questions in your mind. We hope you will write us about any such problems that remain unsolved.

Sowing Bent Seed

The preceding section explains the planting of Bent by the vegetative method. For the planting of a new lawn where rich velvety turf is desired it is probably without an equal, but if the object is to simply improve a present lawn it is possible to accomplish this by sowing Scott's Bent Mixture, a combination of the several available strains of this grass.

New ground may of course be seeded with Bent and at a much less cost than by planting Stolons, but by this means it is not possible except in a few sections of the country to obtain a uniform colsely knit turf like that produced by the planting of Creeping Bent Stolons.



Bent Seed, Enlarged.
The original sample, upper right, contains many weeds. By recleaning, the other three grades were obtained, that in the lower left corner being pure. (Illustration from "Turf for Golf Courses" by Piper and Oakley, courtesy the MacMillan Company).

BEST SECTIONS FOR BENT SEED

It has been found that through New England and in the state of Washington and Oregon, especially along the coast Bent seed makes very satisfactory lawns. In these localities it is probably unnecessary to go to the greater expense of vegetative planting.

Harvesting Bent Seed in Germany.
This picture shows the heart of the Bent section from which most of our importations are made.

RATE OF SEEDING

BENT SEED, as shown in the illustration, is quite small. There are approximately six million seeds in a pound. New ground should be sown at the rate of from three to five pounds per one thousand square feet. Because of the lightness of Bent Seed it should be sown carefully. Keep the hand close to the ground and sow both ways. On a large lawn, by the use of a wheelbarrow seeder or similar equipment, it is possible to seed more evenly and more economically. A light raking, sprinkling and rolling to follow the seeding is recommended.

SEEDING OLD LAWNS WITH BENT

TO convert a lawn consisting largely of Blue Grass and Clover into a Bent lawn by merely reseeding each year with Bent seed is a slow, if not hopeless process. It will require years even if the Bent grows very vigorously, for crowding Blue Grass from its native habitat is a real task for any grass.

A lawn that is badly run down should be torn up and entirely rebuilt. Where reasonably good turf prevails it can be greatly improved by the sowing of Bent seed and an occasional application of compost, well-rotted manure, soy bean meal or Ammonium Sulphate. Before sowing the Bent, dig out the weeds and scratch the surface vigorously with a sharp rake. Two pounds of Bent per 1,000 square feet is a sufficient quantity to use in the resowing of an old lawn. After sowing, again give the ground a light raking, followed by a sprinkling and rolling. Covering the ground to a depth of one-eighth of an inch with compost or rich dirt will not only help the germination of the seed but will greatly benefit the soil.

Fairmount Road,
Ridgewood, N. J.

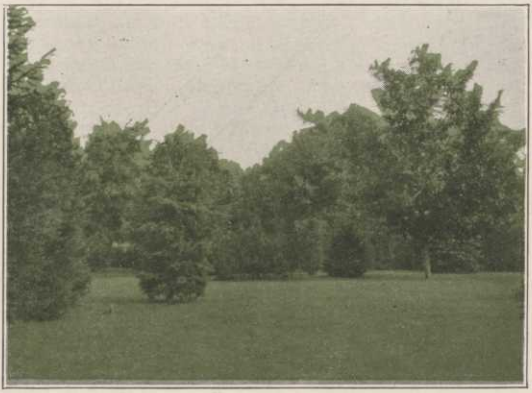
O. M. SCOTT & SONS CO.,
Marysville, Ohio.

GENTLEMEN :—

I have been very well pleased with the Bent Lawn Seed which you sent to me last year. Although I have used various kinds of seed every spring and fall, none have proven as satisfactory as the Bent Seed. Before I used it my lawn always had a large proportion of weeds and wild grass, but the Bent seems to have choked them out.

Yours very truly,

A. F. BAHLINGER.



A view of the lovely turf on the Dyett estate in Eastern New York. Scott's Regular Lawn Mixture used.

Native Grass Mixtures

A TREATISE on lawns would be incomplete without reference to native grasses. Regardless of the fine results obtainable with Bent, the great majority of people will depend upon ordinary lawn mixtures. If our reputation as seedsmen is of any consequence, it is because years ago we conceived the ambition to sell purer seed than any one else. In the case of lawn seed it was not hard to reach our aim. Lawn mixtures that were closely examined and analyzed showed that the chief motive in many cases was to give as much bulk as possible for the money. Chaff fairly bulged from every package, making the purchaser feel that he was getting a wonderful bargain. In reality, the amount of pure, viable seed that would grow or rather that any one would *want* to grow, could have been put in a package half

the size. "Chaff which the wind driveth away" was used for filler. Not only that but in the mixtures were varieties that had no business being there. Cheapness and quick growing ability gave them preference. *Scott's Lawn Seed* made its debut as a practically weedless mixture. Every grass put into it represented the highest standard of quality. Of as great importance is the fact that the original formula varied only in recent years to include Bent, comprises only those grasses that make for a good, permanent lawn. The natural demand for such seed came first from discriminating home owners who could see through price and appreciate quality. Then it came from landscape architects and other recognized users of pure seed. This mixture of ours is now being sown in every grass growing state and Canada.

May we also bring our special Shady Mixture to your attention? It is a combination that has given phenomenal success where other shady mixtures have failed completely. A New England landscape gardener has convincingly described this seed. He says, "Two years ago I made a small lawn with your Shady Mixture in a place where no one else had previously been successful. It was under elm trees, surrounded by high shrubbery. With your Shady Mixture this spot is at present a perfect lawn and was so from the very beginning. It is one of the greenest spots in the city of Providence."

It isn't posssible to maintain exact prices from year to year owing to changes in the market. A present list and order blank will be sent upon request.

POSTSCRIPT

This booklet was published primarily to expound the merits of Bent and does not go into an elaborate discussion of soil preparation, drainage, grading, weed eradication and other important features of lawn making. We therefore suggest that those who wish such information or decide to use a lawn mixture of native grasses rather than Bent ask for our booklet, "The Seeding and Care of Lawns." Other publications of this company are as follows:

Scott's Seed Guide — *a practical guide to more profitable farming.*

Friendly Workers of the Soil — *a treatise on the inoculation of legumes.*

The Seeding and Care of Golf Courses —*an exhaustive study of golf course grasses and problems, gratis to greens chairman and to others at the publication cost of* 50 *cents.*

O. M. SCOTT & SONS COMPANY
Marysville, Ohio