Ohio Scientist Discusses
Home Lawn Care Fallacies

Fallacies concerning maintenance of home lawns were recently brought to light by Dr. R. R. Davis, associate chairman of the Department of Agronomy at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, Wooster.

Contrary to common belief, Davis said, close mowing in spring does not make grass spread. In fact, he revealed, close mowing reduces grass vigor and thereby decreases its ability to spread. Best mowing height, according to Research Center trials, is 2 inches for the average lawn, he said.

Another fallacy Davis attacked was the idea that grass should be left long for best winter survival. Long grass, he cautioned, actually increases thatch and may even increase disease problems. Center research indicates it's best to mow until growth stops, Davis said.

On lawn fertilization, Davis pointed out that slightly acid soil (pH 6 to 7) produces the best bluegrass. Both organic and inorganic fertilizers, used properly, foster improved growth, he said. Best time to fertilize is in the fall, although fertilizer should be applied whenever grass needs it, even during the summer.

Davis said that lawns should be watered as needed, anytime during the day that is convenient.

Fall is the best time to get rid of dandelions, according to Davis. Fall herbicide applications kill both old and new dandelions, done so at a time when desirable shrubs and trees are less susceptible to damage from herbicide drift. Spaces left by dandelions killed in the fall fill in quickly with grass the following spring, Davis said.