

CHAPTER XXI

PESTS

Moles—Leather Jackets—Fairy Rings and Fungi—*Isaria fuciformis* or Leaf Rust.

The Destruction of Moles

Take a long darning needle, nip off half the eye and fix the point into a cork or other suitable handle.

Take some wool, Scotch fingering, and cut it into 2-inch lengths. Soak these pieces in a strong solution of strychnine about double the strength of the British Pharmacopœia Liquid Strychnine; the solution will then be as strong as it can be made. Allow the pieces of wool to dry.

Procure a quantity of good-sized worms.

Catch the middle of a length of wool in the truncated eye of the needle and thrust it into the worm near the head; insert all the wool and then withdraw the needle.

Take a pointed stick, make one or two holes in each mole-run and drop a treated worm in each.

Level the mole-hills so that you can see at a glance if any moles have been missed.

During all these operations use gloves the outsides of which have been rubbed with soil, and be very careful not to leave the poison about.

Daddy Longlegs or Crane-fly Grubs in Turf, and How to Destroy Them

The Daddy Longlegs, or Crane Fly, lays her eggs in turf during the late Summer or early Autumn.

The eggs hatch out soon afterwards, and turn into what are commonly known as crane-fly grubs or leather jackets.

As soon as the eggs are hatched the grubs start feeding on the roots of the grass, which turns brown in patches; these increase in size as time goes on.

Now is the time to detect the presence of the grubs, assuming up to date that they have escaped notice, and to destroy the same. Dig up a brown patch to the depth

of 6 inches, and carefully examine the soil and see if there are any grubs. Needless to say, the grubs when first hatched are very small indeed, but they eventually grow to a full inch in length.

To Kill the Grubs

Take 2 lb. of Paris green and mix it into a paste with 1 lb. of fresh lime, to which add 400 gallons of water.

Apply the solution with a watering can towards the evening, when the grubs come close to the surface to feed, using about 1 gallon per square yard.

About 24 hours after the treatment the grubs will come to the surface in thousands; at this period the turf should be well bush-harrowed or brushed, so as to tear them out of the turf and generally assist in their destruction.

The solution is absolutely harmless so far as the grass is concerned, and a few days after the treatment the turf will begin to recover from the ravages of the grubs.

The Daddy Longlegs prefers a light sandy soil wherein to deposit her eggs, and those interested in the upkeep of sandy grounds should keep a sharp look-out for the pest.

Caution

Paris green, which can be obtained from any chemist, is a very potent poison, consequently it should be used with great care, and no stock of any sort should be allowed to graze on the treated turf within at least two weeks of the application.

Fairy Rings and Fungi

Fairy Rings and other fungi start from spores which are spread by the wind.

These spores are very minute and produced in incredible numbers; but, luckily for those interested in turf, it is but a few that fall on soil congenial to their development.

The spores develop into mycelium or spawn, a white lace-like material which exudes a waxy substance which repels moisture, and for this reason is difficult to eradicate.

Fairy Rings, which are the most troublesome, are best eradicated by digging them out and liming the soil.

Other fungi which are neither so permanent nor so troublesome can be checked or destroyed with a solution

of Sulphate of Iron, in the proportion of $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. to a gallon of water ; using about half a gallon to the square yard.

Isaria fuciformis

A small parasite, the spores of which are carried by the wind and attach themselves principally to the leaves of young grass. The first sign of the disease is a change in colour, the leaves of the young grass turning from a vivid green to yellow, and in the case of a bad attack to blood-red.

If a diseased plant is examined under a strong glass or microscope, the parasite, which somewhat resembles coral in shape and form, can be easily seen.

As a general rule the attack only lasts a few weeks and then subsides without doing any serious damage, but under certain conditions it persists and may do a lot of harm.

As soon as the disease is noticed the grass should be lightly dusted with carbonate of lime, once a week until the attack abates.