

A GOOD LAWN HELPS STOP POLLUTION

Lawngrasses are effective "filters" for trapping a variety of substances that might otherwise wash into the soil and contaminate drainage water. A Kentucky bluegrass lawn has hundreds of leaf-bearing shoots to each square foot, sufficient to strain out dust and grime at the same time that they freshen the air by exchanging oxygen for carbon dioxide. And, as leaves having lived their life cycle crumble into humus, the colloids trap many free chemicals. Underground roots and rhizomes are active, too, picking up solubles such as nitrate.

A study at Ohio State University points up grass's beneficial influence. Water running out of drains underlying test fields covered by bluegrass showed only three-tenths of a pound of nitrogen to leach into the subsoil annually on each acre. Twenty times as much was recorded for fields planted to a cultivated crop, such as corn. Even if the bluegrass sod was heavily fertilized, no more than six-tenths of a pound got into the underground water, again less than one-twentieth the amount for similarly fertilized corn.

The amount of nitrogen in groundwater that has filtered through bluegrass sod is far less than that occurring in natural rainfall. Rainwater measured 16 pounds of nitrogen for each acre annually. Yet the surface runoff from land covered with sod or woodland usually contains less than a pound of nitrogen. Most of the nitrogen in rainwater is picked up by grasses and the rich soil they help create. No need to fear water pollution because you fertilize your lawn! Rather, vigorous grass helps diminish pollution!



Turf-care equipment

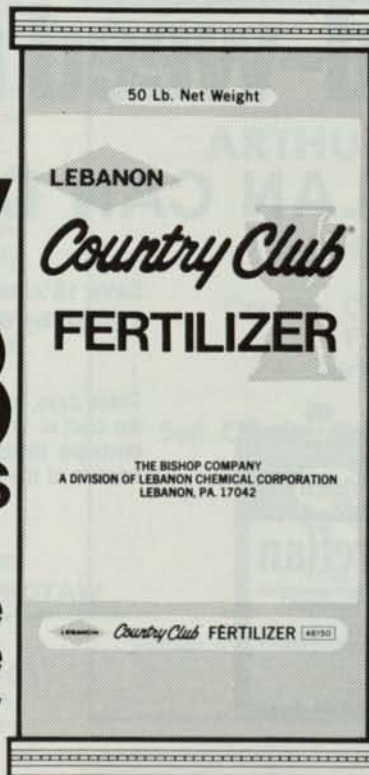
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