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Planting Bent Stolons

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Editor's Note: In response to numerous requests we are publishing these specifications on the proper planting and care of bent stolons.

Next month, August, is the best time to plant stolons in the northern latitudes. It has been known to have a putting green in six weeks by this vegetative method providing favorable weather, which means moist cool weather, prevails. But two things are necessary—first, to have young stock not over a year old, and second, to give them constant, intelligent care.

THE preparation of the soil for planting bent stolons is the same as for grass seed.

A firm level surface of good agricultural soil; preferably of a loamy texture. Heavy clay should be lightened by working in well rotted manure for its humus quality to maintain moisture and air.

Highly soluble chemical fertilizers should not be used until grass has become well established.

If the weather is very hot and dry, soak the ground the night before.

Before planting, rake the surface lightly, then spread the stolons evenly without leaving bare spots; a node to every square inch is ample; if too heavily covered, those stolons that do not have contact with the soil will rot. These stolons should be rolled again and then lightly covered with about a quarter of an inch of top-dressing; this allows the grass to show through in spots; then rolled again and watered.

The top dressing should be a friable soil similar to greenhouse soil. If not obtainable, a good sandy loam will serve. It is more important that it be friable than that it be highly fertile, a quality that will pass through a quarter-inch mesh screen. The ordinary mason's screen is suitable for spreading the top-dressing over the stolons.

A stolon is largely an air plant and therefore should not be smothered by too heavy a top-dressing. Light top dressing and constant moisture are best. One-half cubic yard of soil is ample to cover one thousand square feet of surface.

A clay soil cannot be used, as it bakes under sun and moisture and prevents the grass from coming through.

Water With a Fine Spray

THE watering should be done with a fine spray, care being taken not to wash out the grass, nor drag it with the hose. Care must be taken for the first two weeks, not to let the surface dry out; especially during the middle of the day when the direct sun rays are their hottest. In very hot weather, planting, covering and watering must follow closely. Half an hour of exposure to direct sun rays may be damaging to the vitality of the node.

After the grass has attained about two inches of growth, it may be cut, letting the cuttings fall, then a very light top-dressing applied; this can be done with a shovel and then raked with the back of a rake down into the roots. These cuttings add many nodes for new growth. After two or three weeks of careful watering, the plants will have matured enough to thrive under ordinary good lawn treatment.

The finest greens are obtained by frequent mowing, this also is the best way to force the grass to spread by root extension. The spreading of the roots takes place far more rapidly when kept closely mowed than when allowed to grow long.

After maturity, chemical fertilizers are best.

and should be used several times, both Spring and Fall.

Sulphate is Best Fertilizer

SULPHATE of Ammonia is the superior of all, as it tends to make an acid soil which discourages weeds and clover. Bent grasses thrive in an acid soil. Never use lime unless you want clovers. Sulphate of Ammonia may be applied at the rate of 2½ lbs. to the thousand square feet with safety, and double this quantity if care is taken in applying sufficient water. It may be spread with a Cyclone grass seed spreader, or with a pail of dry sand well mixed, or dissolved in water and sprinkled on. In every case, follow with a drenching of water. In Spring and Fall, it may be applied twice a month until the results are obtained.

A compost or a greenhouse soil are probably superior to any other materials for top-dressings and when used once or twice in the Spring and Fall will give a truly superior grass growth. Straight manures are not recommended, if fresh, there are too many weed seeds; if rotted, can only be applied in late Fall, owing to the coarse fibres contained that have to be raked off in the Spring.

Creeping bent stolons can be planted any month the ground can be worked. August and September are the best months, April and May next, July is the worst, owing to water requirements. October and November are un-

certain, but if dry enough to work the soil in preparation, the risk is not great, because if it turns cold and the plants do not germinate, they will lie dormant until Spring and then come through early; much earlier than Spring planting can be done.

Sun Rays Heat Stolons

STOLONS are much hardier than seeds in every particular except one, and that is, they will not stand direct hot sun rays without having surrounding moisture. The fresher the stolons the better the germinations; therefore when ordering, the plot should be entirely ready, the top-dressing should have been screened, kept dry and ready and the water must be available.

The stolons are often shipped long distances, but with a corresponding risk, especially as to heating; considerable earth is left in the grass to reduce this danger. A delay of one or two weeks is not highly damaging if in early Spring or late Fall.

Should the delay be after the stolons are received, they should be spread out under shade, with good air circulation, and kept moist. A tent is suitable for this.

When inexperienced, a good way to learn how much a bag of stolons should cover, is to lay off a square of surface the size that the shipper advises that one bag should cover, this gives a good idea on how it should be spread.

Planting Bent Stolons for a Turf Nursery

This interesting photograph shows Victor George (on the right), directing the planting of 13,000 square feet of stolons to make a turf nursery. The turf will be used in rebuilding the Number 6 green at the Country Club of LaFayette, Ind. Mr. George is president of the Indiana Greenkeepers Association and one of this country's outstanding greenkeepers

