

# How To Ready Soil for the Next Crop

After sod is carted off to the market, growers have to dive right in and start all over again. Soil preparation is the foundation for a fertile, healthy stand of lush sod and maximum profits.

Most fields are made ready for the next crop in two steps: (1) cultivating, and (2) adding fertilizer. Irrigation is used before seeding as a cultural practice on some farms, depending on local climate and soil type. Does every grower follow the same techniques? We wanted to find out.

How do you plow and work the soil before reseeding your favored variety? How much fertilizer and lime do you put on your fields? Do you pre-irrigate? During the past few months, WTT staffers asked these and other questions of cultivated sod growers throughout the nation.

Professional growers WTT talked with included: Bill Johnson, Halmich Sod Nursery, Brown City, Michigan; Wilco Sod Nursery owner Allan DeMuth, Monee, Illinois; Edward Jacobsen, owner, West-Turf Co., Tehachapi, California; Wiley Miner of Princeton Turf Farms, Cranbury, New Jersey; Mel Rich, Richlawn Turf Farm, Denver, Colorado, and Triangle Sod Company supervisor, Lonas Amerine, Belle Glade, Florida.

## Michigan Peat Seed Bed Not Irrigated

"In Brown City, Michigan it rains enough so we don't need to pre-irrigate, although in areas west of us around Chicago, irrigation is standard procedure," Johnson told us.

"Of our 1,200 farmed," he continued, "about 800 acres is in Merion bluegrass sod. After stripping, we use everything; start out by plowing our peat soil to break it loose, then pack it with a spring-toothed harrow and slowly work from the spring-tooth to a spike-toothed harrow to make a fine bed for seeding,

working the soil as much as time and weather allow.

"We use around 1000 lbs. fertilizer per acre of either 5-20-20 or 5-10-30 (nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium). Years ago we started out with 400 lbs. per acre, and I've been increasing it every year. I don't use lime because we've found that it's unnecessary in our peat soil.

"After the fertilizer is down,

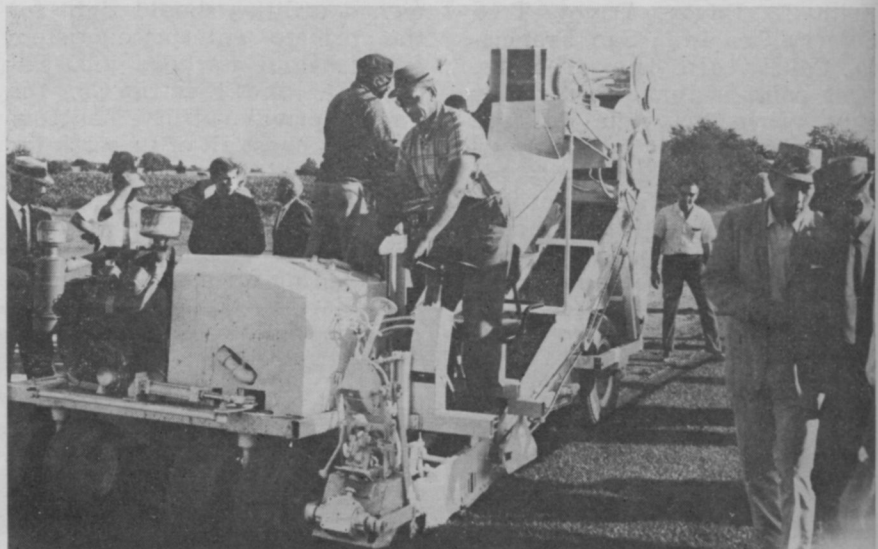
we roll our cullipactor to pack the soil just before seeding."

## Fluffy Loam Packed by Rolling in Illinois

"I use a Graham, seven-tine plow to rip up the dirt here in Monee, Illinois," DeMuth explained in telling us about his post-harvest techniques.

"Our soil is a loam type underlain with black dirt. We usually

## Princeton Turf Shows Its New Sod Harvester



Demonstration of new sod harvester was big event at recent sod growers meeting in New Jersey.

At a recent meeting of the Cultivated Sod Association of New Jersey, Inc., the first public viewing and demonstration of a self-propelled mechanical sod harvester was held. Unveiling of this new equipment was a giant step forward in the mechanical harvesting of sod. The sod harvester has been developed by Princeton Turf Farms of Cranbury, New Jersey.

Manned by a crew of 3 men, the sod harvester will "lift" and palletize sod at a rate three times as fast as the method of harvesting commonly in use today. In addition, another unique feature is the uniformity and thinness of cut in spite of undulations or depressions in the soil surface.

Striving for further improve-

ment of the current model, Wiley Miner of Princeton Turf Farms already has another model on the drawing boards incorporating additional automated features.

The demonstration attracted a group of 70 individuals comprised primarily of sod producers from New Jersey and neighboring states. The demonstration was followed by a chicken barbecue and a business meeting of the association. Arrangements for the demonstration, barbecue and meeting were under the direction of Dr. Henry W. Indyk, extension specialist in turf management, Rutgers—The State University, and presently secretary of the Cultivated Sod Association of New Jersey, Inc.