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Five Tips for Better Turf Management

Effective chemical control of lawn diseases is a must, but the best way to grow healthy grass is to follow a few simple rules that will prevent disease from getting a foothold, Emroy Shannon, plant pathologist with New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service advises.

He outlines five turf management practices that will help avoid lawn disease problems.

1. Select an adapted variety grass when planting turf. As an example, Shannon points out that bermudagrass grows best in southern New Mexico, while bluegrass does well in the northern part of the state but poorly in the southern part.

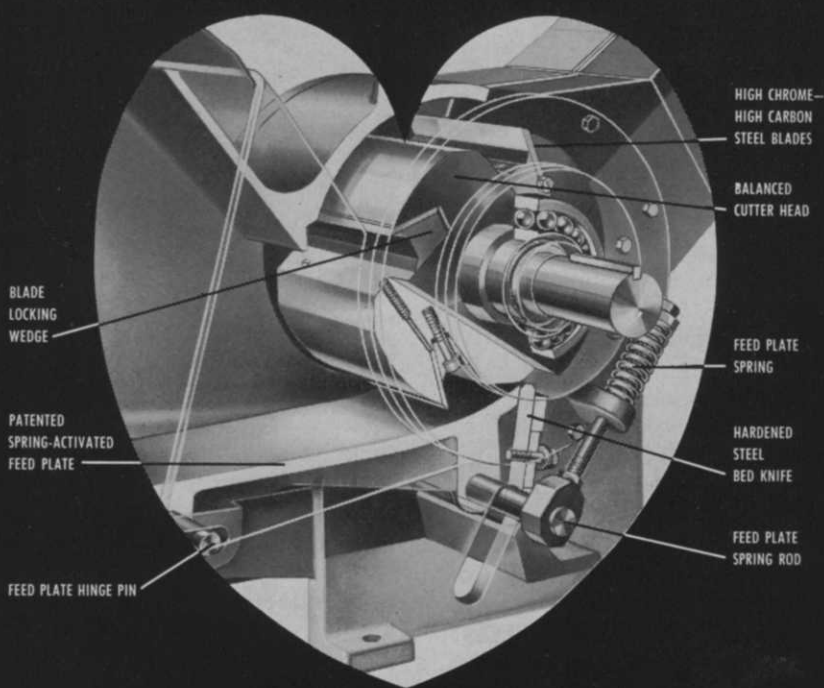
2. Fertilize to keep grass growing vigorously, but avoid too much nitrogen, which causes grass to grow too fast and become weak.

3. Let the grass start to wilt before watering, and then water enough to soak the soil 6 inches or more. Shannon notes that light, daily waterings set up ideal conditions for disease.

4. Do not allow clippings to accumulate. These provide food for fungus diseases and keep the turf humid, a condition that fosters disease.

5. Mow turf before it gets too tall. And then cut off no more than one-half of the leaf surface at one mowing.

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