

Weed Turf With Fertilizer

Director, The Lawn Institute, Marysville, Ohio
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EVERYONE wants a lawn of fine-textured grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, fine fescue or bentgrass. There is no better way to achieve success than to sow quality seed of "fine-textured" species to a nicely prepared seedbed, at a favorable season, usually late August or September, for these topnotch grasses. Given a good start then, each is able to gain a jump on the weeds and generally remain topdog under average care.

But did you ever consider that attractive grasses can be greatly aided by so simple a procedure as fertilizing? Here is what, in one year, a single turf feeding accomplished at the Lawn Institute grounds.

Sod of an old pasture there that merely has been mowed contains a mixture of haygrasses (timothy especially) with bluegrass, and of course many broadleaf weeds. Clover is prominent. Wild carrot is abundant, as is dandelion and miscellaneous other broadleaf weeds such as



Grass in foreground area received heavy fertilizer treatment one year prior to time picture was made. Note almost complete absence of weeds as compared to background (area beyond string) which received no fertilizer. Broadleaf weeds are specially evident near tractor wheel.

occasional chickweeds, veronica and various Compositae. The particular turf in this test had not been fertilized for at least a decade since retired from pasture usage.

In the late spring of 1966 a heavy fertilization (perhaps 2-3 lb. N/M) was made with a 15-5-5

lawn fertilizer. Neither the fertilized area nor the surrounding unfertilized turf received further attention, except for mowing at approximately a 3 inch height. What was the result one year later? The chart tells the story.

Where the fertilizer had been applied the weed population dropped to an average of about 23 broadleaf weeds (of all kinds) per square foot, as compared to 50 for unfertilized areas. And conversely, the grass was increased to as much as 90% of the cover in a number of the sampling locations, compared to only occasional spots with as much as 50% grass on the unfertilized portion. On a square foot basis the frequency of wild carrot was cut fivefold, clover and other broadleaf weeds nearly in half, by application of the fertilizer. Grass was encouraged, and there seemed even to be a slight gain for the Kentucky bluegrass over the haygrasses, although this was not nearly so manifest as

Table 1. Results of Weeding Turf With Fertilizer at Lawn Institute Grounds, Marysville, Ohio, 1966.

Species checked	Average number of plants per square foot, or % cover ^a	
	Fertilized	Unfertilized
White clover	7.6	14.6
Hop clover	4.8	5.8
Wild carrot	3.2	16.4
Dandelion	1.6	3.6
Miscellaneous broadleaves	6.0	9.4
<i>All Dicotyledonae</i>	23.2	49.8
Fine-texture (Kentucky bluegrass).....	55.5%	25.7%
Coarse haygrasses	11.9%	7.6%
<i>Estimated % grass in total cover</i> . . .	67.4%	33.3%

^a Mid-June sampling of old turf, part of which received a single heavy fertilization about a year previously. Based upon counts within a 6" square randomly dropped.

was grass gain over the Dicotyledonous (broadleaf) plants.

The ecological encouragement of grass at the expense of broadleaf species (mostly regarded as weeds) is nothing new. McLeod's thesis at the University of Massachusetts some years ago showed similar changes in components as well as increase in total plant population, as a result of fertilization. In pasture and roadside maintenance it is well recognized that nitrogen favors the grass over the legumes. Other tests, such as those by Juska at Beltsville, demonstrate similar ecological management of lawn populations, including lesser incidence of weeds at high mowing as compared to low. But it is always dramatic to witness marked turf change from so simple a procedure as a single application of fertilizer. If one feeding can make the changes noted in the chart in one year, think what regular feeding (and bolster seeding with quality lawnseed) should be able to accomplish! There is no simpler and less expensive a technique for lawns.

American Sod Producers Launch Drive For Members

Sod growers are being asked to join their new national association group. Organized as the American Sod Producers Association this past summer at East Lansing, Mich., officers and board elected by the charter group have established rates for dues and classes for memberships. They are now soliciting memberships among growers and allied industries.

At a recent meeting at Chicago, the Board of Trustees directed George B. Hammond, Paint Valley Bluegrass Farms, Columbus, O., who is serving as acting secretary-treasurer, to contact growers and industry personnel.

Trustees agreed to continue grower membership dues at \$50 per year. Growers are eligible for Class A memberships. Material and equipment supplier dues were set at \$50 per year for Class B memberships. The \$50 rate will also apply for any company desiring to have more than one

executive participate in ASPA activities. Honor memberships will be accorded others, such as research people, who contribute to the industry.

First annual meeting for the Association will be held at San Francisco, Feb. 18-23. The group will meet in conjunction with the Golf Course Superintendents Association, as they have done in past years prior to formal organization of the grower association on a national basis. Dr. Elwyn Deal, University of Maryland agronomist, will be in charge of the special sod program which is set for Wednesday, Feb. 21, 1968.

When the group was formally organized July 11 as an association, Ben O. Warren, Warren's Turf Nursery, Palos Park, Ill., was elected president. Others elected at that time were: Robert Daymon, Emerald Valley Turf Nurseries, Howell, Mich., vice-president; Louis DeLea, Louis DeLea & Sons, East Northport, Long Island, N. Y., treasurer; Richard Horner, Horner Sod Farms, Wind Lake, Wis., secre-

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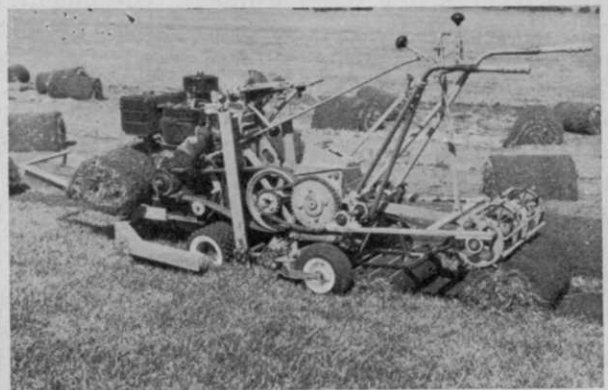
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