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Essentials of Lawn Care

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ESSENTIALS OF LAWN CARE

- S. A. McCrory -

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ESSENTIALS OF LAWN CARE

by

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Each lawn is an individual problem, so that slight modifications of the following methods may have to be made. The old lawn may be full of long tap rooted weeds which have crowded out the grass. In such instances, it may be best to spade the lawn, remove all of the weeds and add composted (decomposed) stable manure or some other fertilizer. Twenty-five pounds of bone meal or superphosphate plus three pounds ammonium sulphate per 1,000 square feet of lawn area will pay rich dividends in the form of a thick green turf.

If the lawn is merely uneven with a fair stand of grass, it should be thoroughly raked and the low places filled with good top soil. Firm the filled or spaded areas with a roller, fill in the depressions made by the roller and then roll in the opposite direction. Seed the spots according to the plan outlined below.

Lawns may be seeded between April 15 and May 15, or they may be seeded successfully the first part of September. A fall seeded lawn will have fewer weeds to interfere than a lawn seeded in the spring. Broadcast the seed and lightly rake the lawn to cover the seed. Firm again by rolling in both directions; sprinkle lightly and keep the soil moist but not muddy. When the grass is one and one-half inches tall, light sprinkling should be replaced by an occasional heavy watering that will wet the soil down three or four inches.

A seed mixture composed of six parts Kentucky blue-grass, two parts red-top, one part perennial rye-grass is recommended for sunny locations. If seeding is not done until June, a small amount of oats will provide some shade for the grass seedlings. For shady parts of the lawn, three parts Kentucky blue-grass, two parts red-top, two parts Chewing's fescue, and one part white clover will give good results. For areas where blue-grass does not grow well or where irrigation is impossible, Fairway strain of crested wheat grass may be used. Two or three pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet is ample.

To keep the lawn grass growing and healthy, the application of commercial fertilizer will be found helpful. If sulphate of ammonia is used, it should be applied at the rate of three pounds for each 1,000 square feet of lawn surface. Heavier applications or lumps may burn the grass. Two applications yearly of ammonium sulphate, one in early spring, and the second after the fall rains start will be enough; or if one of the complete commercial fertilizers is used, one application applied according to directions of the manufacturers will suffice. Thorough watering, following the application will reduce the chance for burning of the grass by the fertilizer.

A second essential to maintaining a good lawn is regular watering. Good equipment for uniform water application is desirable. Thorough watering at intervals so as to keep the soil moist to a depth of 3-4 inches is best. During dry weather this may come two to three times weekly. Weather conditions will influence this.

Clipping the lawn close is like over grazing a pasture and should not be practiced. A lawn so treated will expose the grass roots to sun and wind. Fast growing weed and crab grass soon become a problem where

close clipping is done. For most lawns a height of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches is a good practice for mowing. It should be mowed at frequent intervals so that clippings do not need be removed.

The use of chemicals (2-4-D) has been a great help in eradicating weeds on many lawns. However, it should be kept in mind that such material is used only to destroy weeds and other means will be necessary to obtain a good growth of grass. Also such herbicides are sometimes injurious to shrubs and ornamental plants.

Starting a new lawn will differ only in leveling and otherwise preparing the soil. "Basement clay" should always be removed and the top soil spread to a depth of at least 3-4 inches. Commercial fertilizer as described should be applied before seeding and worked into the soil.