

AGRICULTURE

Gardeners should establish lawn maintenance programs

September is extremely important in this area for lawn maintenance. A basic program for an established lawn is essential if you want great grass by spring.



First, make a thorough inspection of your grounds for potential trouble. Most lawns from time to time develop bare spots. On the other hand, existing grass gets covered by weeds.

Rake out the dead grass in bare spots and break up the soil. Rake until soil particles are fine and even. Cast grass seed and mulch. Keep area evenly moist as seedlings emerge.

Weeds can be controlled mainly by preventing the development of seeds—regular mowing will help eliminate the

problem.

Weeds may also be controlled by increasing fertilizer and combating insect damage. Organic gardeners fight varmints by fertilizing spring and fall planting a mixture of grass seeds, mowing at a height of three to four inches, and watering early in the day.

If you're sick and tired of the whole battle, Keith Barrons in *Flower and Garden Magazine* says to apply some accepted chemicals. Use 2-4-D for dandelions and plantains, herbicides containing MCPP for chickweed and clover. Make sure ground is moist before you apply any mixture, such as right after a good rain when you think there

will be a couple of dry days. Avoid mowing for several days to allow herbicide to be absorbed into underground parts.

Barrons goes on to say that fertilizing is more important in fall than spring, as fertilizer plus the onslaught of hot weather will make fescues and bluegrasses exhaust themselves in a fit of rapid growth. This leads to inadequate root establishment.

Types of fertilizer depend on your choice of grass seed. Always follow manufacturers' directions.

Organic Gardening Encyclopedia lists several lawn foods that are organic. Bone meal, rich in nitrogen and calcium, makes a good top

dressing for old turf. Fresh cattle and sheep manure must be weathered if it is applied to old lawns. Packaged dehydrated manures may be applied at any time. Cotton seed meal is an excellent source of nitrogen, and should be applied with other lawn foods. Tobacco scrap is often overlooked. These stems and fragments are an excellent source of potash and other nutrients.

Lime, or lack thereof, can be detected by submitting soil samples to your state experiment stations and follow the directions it sends you.

You can test for pH yourself by pressing a piece of litmus paper

into soil after a rain. If it stays the same color the pH is approximately seven. Pink coloration indicates acidity, while blue denotes alkalinity. When you use this method, take five or more samplings in different places in the yard.

There are several good choices for cool weather grasses in this area—Bermudas, bluegrasses, and centipedes. Zoysia lawn should be started in May, June, or July.

Consult your agricultural agents for the proper seed. Most likely he will suggest a mixture of varieties, such as Kentucky bluegrass.

To recapitulate, remember

these five basic steps: (1) check for bare spots and reseed; (2) eliminate weeds; (3) fertilize; (4) lime; and (5) use proper grass seed and maintain even moisture.

Now you are going to have a super lawn. It is easy when you know how.

Rip Van Winkle could sleep for 20 years because his neighbors had no radios.

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Two for one subirrigation systems are a blessing for farmers

(Editor's note: The following article was submitted by Tony Short, District Conservationist of the USDA, Soil Conservation Service at 104 Dobbs Street Hertford.)

"Two for the price of one." That's what farmers in eastern North Carolina are saying about drainage systems known as subirrigation that not only drain fields, but irrigate them too.

Basic tile and open drainage systems keep the ditch's water level just below the drain tiles. These systems improve conditions for seedbed preparation, planting and harvesting. They also prevent plant stress from too much moisture during the growing season.

But on some soils you can reverse from drainage to irrigation by installing a water control structure such as a flashboard riser at key locations in the outlet ditch. This new concept, subirrigation, applies water beneath the soil surface. It raises the water table and maintains it within reach of the crop's root system.

Due to cost, subirrigation is recommended only for soils requiring drainage. The cost for installing a combination drainage and subirrigation system is only slightly higher than installing the basic drainage system alone. The initial investment could be recovered in four to six years with good management.

Irrigation can increase corn yields as much as 30-60 bushels per acre. Subirrigation, however, offers many benefits over conventional center pivot systems including: (1) water needs are reduced since runoff water is stored in the soil profile; (2) labor requirements and annual maintenance cost are low; (3) water requirements are supplied on a uniform daily basis; (4) operating costs and energy requirements are lowered by pumps operating on low head and utilizing gravity flow in open ditches; (5) all fields including the corners can be irrigated; and (6) water losses from evaporation are decreased.

There are one to 1.5 million acres of agricultural land in the coastal plains of North Carolina with a potential for subirrigation. However, certain conditions must exist before it is practical. Soil types, availability of a dependable water supply and height of water table all effect the suitability of a field for subirrigation.

Call your Soil Conservation Service Office for technical assistance on planning and designing water management systems that will serve both your drainage and irrigation needs.

Soup-to-Nuts

SAVINGS



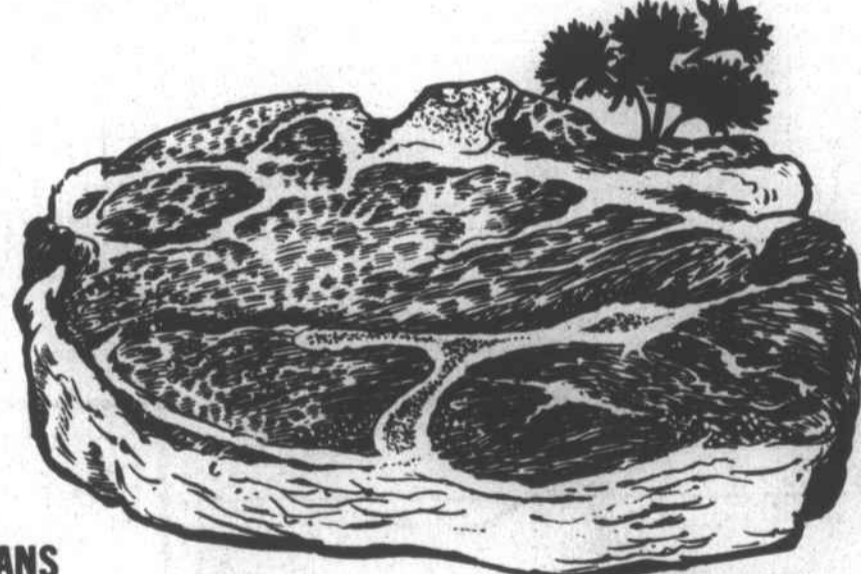
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