

How Your Lawn Looks This Summer Reflects the Way You Treat It Now

That long hot summer is coming. The way your lawn will look depends on the way you treat it before summer gets here. According to Vernon H. Reynolds, Duplin county extension chairman, it takes good management and persistence to grow a good lawn. However, neglect and poor management can soon turn a good lawn into a playground for dust devils.

It's never too early to begin preparing the lawn for the stresses of the summer," says Reynolds. "Any needed

lime should be applied now and fertilizer applications should begin soon. The cool season grasses such as fescue and bluegrass should get their first topdressing in February and treatment for the summer grasses should begin in April," continued Reynolds.

The acidity or pH of the soil should be maintained in the proper range. Reynolds says this cannot be emphasized too strongly. If the pH is too low, application of fertilizer only aggravates the situation. A soil test seems to be the best way to get a measure of the present acidity.

A testing service is provided by the Soil Testing Division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. The Division agronomists have compiled the latest information

and will make various treatment suggestions designed to correct the fertility problems encountered by the home gardener. The testing service is one of the free services offered to the people by the Department of Agriculture.

A sample of soil which represents the average conditions in your yard, flower bed, or vegetable garden is all the laboratory requires. Of course, you must furnish enough information about your situation so that corrective measures can be prescribed. To make it easy the laboratory furnishes all the needed materials and instructions. These are available from the laboratory in Raleigh or at the county extension office in Kenansville.

One of the secrets of successful management of lawn grass, according to Reynolds, lies in controlling the growth of the unwanted as well as the wanted grass. The growth of both kinds is controlled by sunlight, temperature, and the fertility level resulting from the application of fertilizer. Inasmuch as the temperature is beyond the control of the home gardener, adjusting the fertilization in relation to the growth season of the desirable grass is suggested. This is the basis for the time schedule for applying fertilizer which accompanies each soil test re-

port. Sunlight as a whole is also beyond the gardeners control, by Reynolds suggests that it can be controlled to the disadvantage of some of the unwanted grasses. Crabgrass in fescue and bluegrass can be retarded or smothered out by keeping the lawn mower cutting height set at two and one half or three inches. The high thick grass prevents sunlight penetration to the soil surface at the intensity required to germinate crabgrass seeds.


The key to success seems elusive but knowing and satisfying the demands of each plant

provides the intrigue necessary to keep home gardeners proclaiming "Just wait 'til next year!"


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