

## Grass Stimulant for the Lawn

**A**BOUT a month after active grass growth has commenced on the lawn, it is desirable to apply a grass stimulant to keep the lawn in first-class condition. Nitrate of soda is a good fertilizer and will make the grass grow thickly with a rich dark green color that will show itself promptly after the application. Those who use nitrate of soda should apply it at the rate of 50 pounds per acre once a month throughout the Summer, beginning about the middle of May in the latitude of Washington, D. C.

The nitrate of soda should be applied just before a rain or a sprinkling with the hose. Under ordinary conditions it will keep the lawn a vivid green during the period when the vitality of the plant is low. The application of this fertilizer combined with careful watering (described in a previous article) will prevent the parched appearance of the lawn during the dry, hot Summer season.

### Care in Using Fertilizer.

When nitrate is applied during any dry period it should be used carefully. It can, however, be applied at any time if the nitrate of soda is powdered up fine before using, but it is safest to dissolve it in water. Because of a generally prevailing fear that this fertilizer may ruin a lawn if used carelessly, the department has been experimenting to see just how

much nitrate of soda would have to be used in order to kill grass. These experiments seem to show that nitrate of soda can be used fairly extensively without causing injury, for attempts to kill grass with it were unsuccessful except when such large quantities as 400 pounds to an acre were used.

Although fertilization is a splendid thing for the up-keep of a lawn, it will never entirely make up for a lawn soil that was poorly prepared in the beginning. It is only when a lawn soil is enriched with stable manure, lime, and bone phosphate that a lawn may be maintained in the best condition.

### Unrotted Manure a Menace.

Unrotted stable manure should be kept away from a lawn at all times, the opinion of many to the contrary notwithstanding. Stable manure contains weed seeds and particularly after the early growth of grass these weed seeds will be encouraged to sprout, for at this time the grass is weakened by its Spring growth and the weeds have additional impetus to spread. A weed has been defined as a "plant out of place." Weeds are certainly out of place on a well-kept lawn. Fertilizing materials have a great advantage over stable manure as they contain no weed seeds.

There are other fertilizers beside nitrate of soda that are most valuable for the lawn but their use is more especially adapted to the Fall.

## Growing Herbs in American Gardens

**T**HERE are but three or four herbs that are used for culinary purposes by the average American housewife, while there are a dozen that could well find a place in our gardens, as they do with Europeans. Not every garden has even sage or parsley, though either is easily propagated.

Sage may be propagated from seed or layers from the parent stool except with the Holts Mammoth, which is by far the best variety, and must be propagated from layers or slips. This variety never blooms and should be planted two feet or more apart. The other kinds may be set closer. One large bunch of a year or two years' growth will make a number of smaller sets when divided. The common use of sage is as a seasoning for sausage and dressing, the leaves being used.

Thyme is smaller than sage, and it may be propagated from seed sown early in the Spring or from sets. It may be grown six inches apart. The flowers and leaves are used as a flavoring for soups and boiled meats. Thyme tea is also used as a remedy for nervous headache.

### Savory.

Savory is of two kinds, the Summer or annual and the Winter or perennial. Winter savory should be clipped within a few inches of the ground every Spring. Savory is used similarly to thyme, either alone or mixed with marjoram and thyme. The flavor is excellent, and it is used likewise with salads of various kinds as a condiment. The leaves and tender tops are the parts used.

Marjoram is the favorite dressing for fish, though it is used also for chicken and other meats and in sauce and soup; it is used as a garnish. The seeds are planted in drills and thinned to stand two feet apart.

Parsley is an old-time favorite, and probably well known to almost everyone. The plant will grow large enough to use the first year and make a still larger growth the second, after which it dies, but the seed will come up again without the trouble of planting. The green leaves are used as a garnish. It is easily grown and often remains green all Winter.

### Dill.

Dill is an annual, and grows easily from seed sown in the Spring in drills. It seeds profusely, and they are the part that is used. These seeds are used to flavor pickles. It may be grown in the same place every year by allowing a few of the seed to fall on the ground, where they will come in the Spring.

Lavender is a hardy shrub and is grown for its pleasant odor and as a medicine. The spikes and blossoms are used in drawers and wardrobes to impart a pleasing odor. It is also used as a remedy for sleeplessness.

Horehound and catnip are found growing wild in all parts of the Middle States, and their value is well known as medicinal herbs. Among some of the other minor herbs which are useful for culinary purposes are

anise, coriander and caraway, all three grown for their seeds, which are used as a condiment in pastry and pickles. Angelica, rosemary and hyssop are grown for the leaves and stems and used for flavoring.

### Pick Before Bloom.

It is important to gather the leaves and stems at the proper time and care for them in such a way as to preserve their flavor. Such as sage, thyme, marjoram, savory and lavender should be picked just before or as soon as the bloom appears. Both leaves and flowers of thyme and lavender are used. When the leaves or flowers and stems are gathered they should be dried in the shade where there is a good circulation of air. When thoroughly dry remove the coarser stems and seal in glass fruit jars.

Since dill, anise, caraway and several others are grown for the seed only, these should be saved at the proper time and well dried, then sealed in jars. When the heads are ripe and perfectly dry from dew they should be cut and placed in a good place to dry. When dry enough they should be threshed out with a flail or rubbed out with the hands and put away.—H. F. Grinstead.

### Ashes in the Garden.

Ashes indirectly increase the available nitrogen of the organic matter in the soil. Besides the potash, ashes contain other ingredients which are of value to plants, namely, about 1 or 2 per cent of phosphoric acid, a little magnesia, and a great deal of lime. The importance of these last-named elements is made plain by the esteem in which leached ashes are held by some of our farmers, although from leached ashes all but a very small portion of the potash has been washed out. The farmer who wishes to restore potash to the soil by the use of ashes should take great care that they are kept dry and are not allowed to leach at all. Many housewives save their house ashes and leach out the potash for use in making soap. They may now have an additional reason for conserving them, namely, their increased value as a grain fertilizer. But as has just been said, ashes to be used for the improvement of the soil should not be permitted to leach.

### Orchard Hints.

The bruise of an apple may not at once develop into rot, but will make a brown spot which disfigures and lessens the value of the fruit.

Many farmers who have been growing fruit for years do not know that the apple and most other fruit trees form fruit buds in the late Summer months.

Apples keep best when allowed to hang on the trees until they reach maturity, but that does not mean soft and ripe. It is a common fallacy that green, immature fruit will keep the best.

Promptly gather up and burn all brush and rubbish in the orchard.

Any time in the year is the right time to begin planning for an asparagus plot.

Remember that the wood ashes are the best kind of fertilizer for the orchard, lawn or garden.

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