

# HINTS ON THE FORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF GARDEN LAWNS, CROQUET GROUNDS, CRICKET GROUNDS, TENNIS LAWNS, ETC.

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In the first place, careful preparation of the ground proposed to be laid down to turf is necessary. This should be commenced in the autumn by draining, if found requisite, and digging to the depth of six to twelve inches, according to the nature of the soil. When this has been done, the land should be levelled and made firm with the spade and subsequently raked, to remove stones, etc. Should the natural soil be too stony, it will be advisable to procure a supply of good mould, and spread this over the land to the depth of two or three inches. If the soil is poor, some well-rotted stable dung will be very beneficial. Where this cannot be obtained, we would advise, as the best dressing of artificial manure, 200 lbs. of superphosphate of lime and 100 lbs. of Peruvian Guano per acre. In April, after the ground has been made thoroughly fine and clean, a heavy iron roller should be used to make it perfectly level, and as the subsequent appearance of the lawn depends in a great measure on this part of the preparation, we cannot too strongly urge the importance of its being well done. The ground should then be evenly raked and the seed sown. April or May, and September, are the best months for sowing. As to the sorts of seeds suitable for garden lawns, etc., we can, after a long course of personal observation of the numerous kinds which have come under our notice, confidently recommend the mixture described below as most certain to produce a close velvety turf.

After the sowing has been accomplished the ground should be again rolled, and as soon as the young plants have attained the height of two or three

inches, the whole crop should be carefully gone over with a sharp scythe. *Frequent mowings and rollings are indispensable to maintain the turf in good order.* By adopting these means a close, green sward will be obtained in nearly as short a time as a lawn produced by sodding, while it will be far more permanent and at much less expense.

It will sometimes happen that annual weeds, indigenous to the soil, come up; these can easily be checked, if not destroyed, by mowing them off *as soon as they make their appearance.* Plantain, dandelions, and sometimes thistles, too, will often appear, and these must be cut up, each one singly, about one inch below the surface (not deeper), and about a teaspoonful of salt dropped over the cut part. Birds are very fond of grass seeds, and care should be taken to keep them off until the seeds are well up.

For lawns requiring improvement it is only necessary to sow fresh seed, either in the spring or autumn, using a small tooth rake, and rolling afterwards. Moss in lawns is generally a sign of poorness in the soil or want of drainage. To effect its removal we advise after raking off as much as possible, a top dressing of quicklime, mixed with rich compost, applied late in the autumn, and a sowing of more seed in the spring, or a top sowing of soot will, by encouraging the growth of the grass, destroy the moss. This should be applied in the spring at the rate of about sixteen bushels per acre.

On croquet or cricket grounds, where the turf has become bare through constant use, we advise a thick sowing of seeds on the bare spots in September or early in April, rolling subsequently and mowing as soon after as practicable. A light dressing of manure over the whole, laying square during the winter, will often be found beneficial in encouraging