

THE ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD LAWN.

THIS is the season when we are often asked how to establish a good lawn and insure its permanence. Downing names three essential requisites: (1) Deep soil; (2) proper kinds of grass, and (3) frequent mowing. For this climate I would add a fourth—that is, plenty of water. The air of an average American summer is not so well adapted to the production of a fine lawn as is the humid atmosphere of Great Britain. There not so much attention need be given to the richness of the soil, as the moisture takes its place in a measure. But in this country the soil should be deep and rich, with a subsoil capable of retaining moisture, but not in excess. If the subsoil is hard and tenacious it should be well under-drained and trenched, or subsoiled to a depth of sixteen or eighteen inches, so as to create a reservoir for holding moisture which may be drawn upon by the plants as needed during dry times. This matter of subsoiling does not receive the attention it deserves in our climate. Many persons seem to think that if the surface soil is in good condition nothing further is needed. Such persons should bear in mind that it is a deep soil only which will furnish moisture for grass roots through continued drought, so that the lawn will remain green during the entire summer and autumn.

Again, too much attention cannot be given to the preparation of the soil before the seed is sown. It should be plowed and re-plowed, cultivated, harrowed and rolled until the whole is thoroughly pulverized and mixed to a depth of ten inches. This work should be done in the fall and then the plot should be left to settle all winter before the seed is sown. The foundation will then be firm. This not only makes a compact bed which the tender grass roots need, but it will

insure the lawn against those little knolls and hollows which are so objectionable in appearance and do so much to obstruct the use of the mower.

Only two kinds of grass are really worthy of consideration for this climate. These are Kentucky Blue Grass (*Poa pratensis*), and Red Top (*Agrostis vulgaris*). There are a few others, such as Rhode Island Bent Grass, a finer kind of *Agrostis*, which may be sown, but it is more expensive and little superior to a good strain of Red Top. A little Sweet Vernal Grass, or White Clover, may be added, but neither is essential. The coarser grasses, such as Timothy, Orchard Grass or Meadow Fescue, should never be sown in a lawn. They are short-lived and too coarse and stiff to make a soft, velvety carpet. There are many lawn mixtures advertised and sold at high prices; some of them are good and will make excellent lawns; but, if analyzed, the best of them will be found to consist mainly of Blue Grass and Red Top, which may be bought in the market for from \$1.50 to \$2.50 a bushel.

To seed properly, from two to three bushels will be required to the acre, owing in some measure to the amount of chaff mixed with the seed. This should be sown as early in the spring as possible, so that the young plants may become well established before the hot dry weather of midsummer. The sowing of oats with the seed has been recommended as a protection to the young grass plants, but I have never yet found that a strong, gross-feeding plant like the oat would furnish protection to a delicate, slow-growing one. On the contrary, the so-called protector will rob the weaker plant of its nourishment. Red Top germinates much more quickly than Blue Grass, and will