

HORTICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.



PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT OF LAWNS.

The following essay, from the Gardener's Monthly, was lately read before the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, by W. Bright :

The most important point in the preparation of a lawn, is to obtain an open, porous, well-drained soil, of *good depth*. To this end, if the soil be naturally wet, it must be drained in some manner, either by tile or stone drains. If sufficiently drained the requisite depth may be obtained by thorough ploughing and subsoiling, using such ploughs and such force of team as will open the soil to the depth of eighteen inches at least.

The subsoil ploughing should be performed in the dry weather of the summer or fall, previous to seeding the following spring. Free harrowing is of course useful.

The *quality* of the soil must next receive attention, and it is vastly important that this should be of *uniform quality* all over the surface, and of *uniform depth*. Nearly all lawns are graded more or less, and when this is done, be careful that the soil is kept of uniform quality and thickness. The surface soil must frequently be taken off large spaces, and after the grading has been done, it must be replaced in such a manner that it shall as nearly as possible resemble in quality and depth the natural soil.

Sandy soils, as everybody knows, may be greatly improved by a dressing of clay or good clayey loam, and clay soils by the addition of sand. This is a simple fact, but one not sufficiently heeded in the hurry which usually attends the preparation of new grounds.

As to manuring, if the land be very poor, it may be heavily manured in the fall, with good, short, well-rotted stable manure; or with a compost of muck and stable manure. Bone dust, superphosphate of lime, and wood ashes are of course valuable additions to such a compost. If the land is good, that is, good corn or wheat land, it will need no manure. It is not so much richness of soil as *dearth*, freedom from excess of moisture, and uniformly good texture and good quality that we desire—Mixing poor and good soil, in spots, in various parts of the lawn, when grading, will produce a soil which can never be made of uniform color and beauty by any future dressing or manuring. The soil must be of uniform good quality and uniform depth, to make a good lawn.

The treatment of the lawn, the first spring after it is graded, will be as follows :—The first day, after the frost is out of the ground and the soil is sufficiently dry to be worked, let the winter-washed places be repaired, then harrow the whole surface carefully, and if not quite smooth, hand-rake the rougher parts using also the roller if necessary to obtain a fine smooth surface. A little lime, and well-rotted compost may also be applied at this time if required.

The seed should be sown as early as possible. Sow on recently harrowed ground, not too rough. The seed needs to be barely covered with earth. It is better, perhaps, after sowing to cover the seed with a hand rake, using both teeth and back of rake to cover it.

It is not desirable to sow any sort of grain with the seeds for a lawn, nor to sow a great variety of mixed grasses. The best grass seed is the common green-grass (*Poa pratensis*), [otherwise known as Kentucky blue-grass, June grass, &c.]

As soon as the seed germinates, and the grass comes up an inch, on a dry day pass a light roller over it. When the grass is three or four inches high, cut it with a sharp scythe, as close as possible. Mow it with the blade of the scythe *hard on the ground*.—Cut the grass every two weeks during summer in the same manner. A little hay may be obtained by spreading the grass, when cut, very thin, and moving it once a day, without injury to the lawn. But it is better to mow *often and close*, and remove the grass at once, using it for mulching trees, &c.