Lawns

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Design for Everyday Living

Control of Moss In Lawns

Moss growing in lawns plagues many homeowners. This is usually the result of improper drainage and not soil acidity as is generally thought. Other conditions, such as insufficient light and poor air circulation, also contribute to conditions favorable to the growth of moss because they slow down the evaporation of water from the soil.

Mosses are very small leafy plants which appear to the casual glance like a mat of green wool. They are among the most successful and universal plants known and constitute the greater bulk of Bryophytes with about 12,000 known species. Scarcely any part of the earth that will support plants at all is without mosses because they endure extraordinary extremes of climate and growth situations.

Because of their adaptability, they invade lawns where conditions are unfavorable for grass, or even for weed growth. Mosses vary greatly in size and have no roots, but instead, they form filaments called "rhizoids." Several different species may be found on lawns but the control is the same for all.

CULTURAL CONTROL

1. **Improve Drainage**
   Soils which are constantly wet because of improper drainage require the installation of drain tile throughout the area to remove excess moisture. Make certain the the water is drained away from all parts of the lawn or wet conditions could result in other areas.

2. **Provide For More Light**
   Moss is usually found in lawn areas that are heavily shaded. This may be corrected by removing the lower branches and thinning the crowns of trees to allow more sunlight to reach the area. If conditions cannot be corrected in this manner, consider the possibility of substituting ground covers for grass.

3. **Improve Air Circulation**
   Low-branching trees are also the cause of poor air circulation. Removing lower branches and thinning the crown will help improve air circulation.

4. **Maintain High Soil Fertility**
   Soils which have not been conditioned for the cultivation of grasses should be prepared according to recommendations for the cultivation of lawns. Make a soil test to determine the proper amount of lime and fertilizer to be applied.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

1. **Powdered Copper Sulphate**—Apply 2 pounds per acre or 3 level tablespoons per 1,000 sq. ft. (May be dissolved in water at the rate of approximately 5 gallons of water per 1,000 sq. ft. for hose-end sprayers or 50 gallons per acre for tractor-drawn sprayers.) Wear gloves and old clothes when using copper sulphate because it stains clothes permanently and is difficult to remove from the skin.

2. **Ammonium Sulphate**—10 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft. May be applied directly to the area. Apply when moss is actively growing.

NOTE: These chemical controls are only temporary until the drainage and other adverse conditions are corrected.

GENERAL REMARKS

To reestablish the lawn, follow the recommendations given in Pub. No. 405 NEW LAWNS and Pub. No. 406 LAWN CARE AND MAINTENANCE.

These are available from County Extension Offices. Remember, the lawns will not become established until drainage and other adverse conditions are corrected.