

Home Improvement Guide For '65

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Timely Tips on GARDENING

By Betty Frankel

Plump robins are scurrying across greening lawns hunting for worms, and crocuses are bursting into bloom in sunny spots in the garden. Red-wing blackbirds trill from a cattail marsh and tiny spring peepers chorus from the ponds. Eagerly, the gardener notes these and other signs of Spring. The first warm days are good for clean-up chores and for pruning, lawn feeding and seeding. Digging operations can commence when the soil has become warm and dry enough for a handful to crumble when it is squeezed.

LAWN CARE
After being drab and brown for many months, lawns are turning green. This is a most welcome sight, for nothing sets off a house and garden better than an expanse of velvety green turf. However, it takes planning and effort to keep a lawn looking its best throughout the growing season.

We are compelling the grass plants to behave in an unnatural way. We seed the lawns heavily so the plants grow "close" together in fierce competition for available moisture and nutrients. We feed these plants to stimulate growth, then shear them off close to the ground. We tread upon them and crush them and subject them to

treatment that no other plants can withstand; and despite all this we still expect them to flourish and provide us with a flawless emerald carpet.

IT IS EASY TO SEE why lawns need special care and why the carpet is a poor one if the necessary tender loving care is not provided. Begin the program by giving the lawn a brisk raking to remove accumulated debris and to loosen up matted grass. Feed the lawn early in the season with a high nitrogen fertilizer. Chemical fertilizers have nitrogen in a form that is readily available and gives the lawn an immediate boost. This, however, is soon depleted and more fertilizer should be applied later in the season. Organic fertilizers release their nitrogen more slowly and last a long time. Some gardeners have found they get good results by giving an application of chemical fertilizer early in the season, followed by an application of a urea-form or other organic fertilizer.

Where turf has been worn thin or where bare spots have

developed, scratch the soil to loosen the surface and seed with a grass mixture that is the same as used to make the lawn originally. Keep moist until the seeds sprout.

IF CRABGRASS WAS a problem, this is the time to use a pre-emergent killer that kills the seeds before they can grow. Follow the directions carefully for the product that you use. Chickweed killers can be used effectively now, but 2,4-D and other broad-leaf weed killers work better later in the season when the weather is warmer and the weeds are growing more actively.

Rolling is generally not necessary unless there has been unusual heaving from frost. Too much rolling with a heavy roller is not good as it compacts the soil too much. If grass clippings have accumulated and developed a "thatch" or if the grass is very matted, the lawn should be aerated



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with a special spike roller or with a garden fork.

It is beneficial to top-dress the lawn with a thin layer of well-decayed organic material such as peat moss or compost mixed with an equal part of

loam. Use a mixture of organic material and sand or wood ashes on heavy clay soils. Lime is seldom needed in this area. It is used to counteract a too-acid soil.

REMINDEES
Plant new lawns as early in the season as possible, but make sure grading is properly done and the soil has settled before any seeding is done.

Never, but NEVER Such

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Quarterly Survey On Home Repairs

A sample survey of residential alterations and repairs covering the first quarter of 1965 will be made among selected families in the Farmington area starting on April 1, according to Director Robert A. Yerkey of the Bureau of the Census regional office in Detroit.

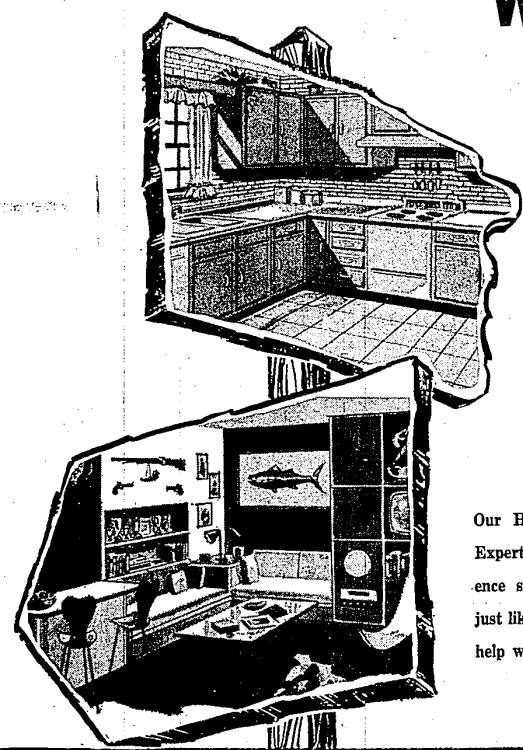
The survey will require about two weeks to complete and is part of a national study involving about 8,000 homeowners throughout the nation. The data collected provide a statistical picture of the importance of home alterations and repairs in the U.S. economy.

The Census Bureau representatives who will visit local families in the repair survey are Florence Howell, 14534 Ardmore Ave., Detroit, and Wanda Lauwers, 9301 Rose-dale, Allen Park.

THINK "SMALL" when it comes to spring cleaning. The biggest cleaning operation of the year goes far better if the job is separated into many little tasks done over a period of several weeks.

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