

Give Power Mower Checkup Before Using

Before cutting the lawn for the first time this spring, take time to prepare your power mower for faithful service. If it hasn't had a tuneup or sharpening lately, your best bet may be to take it to a competent service man. For a minor check-up, here's a do-it-yourself check list from the technical service engineers.

- Remove dried grass, dirt and debris from the entire mower. Use a good rust remover and touch up paint where necessary.
- Wipe the mower with a clean rag soaked in light oil. Never use gasoline as a cleaning agent. Many safe, commercial solvents are available.

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Observer GARDEN PAGE

Wednesday, June 2, 1965 (P.R.F.N. GC 5-B) Page 3-B

Now Is Time to Act Plant Bulbs for Colorful Summer

Spring brings tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and a host of little bulbs. But, early June also means bulb-planting season for summer blooming types which are dug up again in the fall.

Best known are the gladioli, strong-growing, dependable and colorful. Place them in clumps in the shrub or perennial border as well as rows for cutting.

If the large ones are too tall, switch to the miniatures which are just the right size for indoor decorations. Plant the large ones 5 to 6 inches deep and at least 6 inches apart, the smaller kinds 1 to 2 inches less.

For a real show, try the new dwarf (3 feet) canna. They grow in attractive pastel colors and, beside groups in the garden, they are also dramatic in urns, tubs or planters on porch or patio.

For plenty of cut flowers or bedding effects give dwarf dahlias a try. They are surprisingly prolific.

If your soil isn't too dry, few flowers will cause the comment that gladioli wilt; three-petaled with a broad, cup-shaped depression in the center.

Besides the bright oranges, yellows and reds, these cups are spotted like a leopard. Plant in inches deep and about 5 apart. If fragrance is what you want, you can't afford to neglect the tuberose. One spike can scent the whole of a summer garden, particularly in the evening.

Then, there are the lilies, glorious white flat trumpets with intriguing fall-like structures reaching out beyond. They, too, are often strongly fragrant and can bloom in as little as three weeks when planted late in the spring.

Gladioli-like and also very sweet are the acanthuses, white with stony markings in the throat. Also, somewhat gladioli-like but without the scent are the montbretias, graceful and butterfly-like in the pink-orange tones.

These are but a few of the many bulbs which anyone can plant in the spring to bloom in summer and fall. Dig them all after frost has killed the tops, dry off and store in a cool, dry, well-ventilated cellar in very slightly dampened peat moss or in polyethylene bags for another year of colorful blooms.

Steel Basket Is Aid In Transplanting Shrubs

Spring is one of the best times of the year for transplanting or transplanting most types of evergreens, bushes and shrubs. So if this project is on your garden agenda, prepare for it by adding an all-purpose galvanized steel basket to your planting equipment.

The metal utility basket—the modern-day version of the old wooden hushel basket—is ideal, suited for use in transplanting small shrubs and even large ones. It's large enough and sturdy enough to permit you to carry the shrub along with a good clump of soil in which it has been growing. This will help lessen the transplant shock.

Be sure, of course, that when digging a hole for planting that you dig the hole large enough. Don't try to wedge the roots into a small hole or you're apt to damage them.

Spread a generous quantity of peat moss along the bottom of the hole and add some new black dirt or humus after set.

Lawn Grass Hardy Stuff

Air temperature at about four feet makes the official weather record. Recorded temperatures may seem reasonably pleasant and constant to you, yet down in the lawn where the Kentucky bluegrass and fine fescue plants live wide extremes can occur. A lot depends upon where the grass is growing.

One thin soil registered a temperature of 140 degrees midday on a sunny summer day. The weather in another instance, was 40 degrees colder on a north-facing slope than on the opposite slope just south into the sun just across the road. The top of a rise may be bone dry, while the base seeps water like a spring.

To an extent any lawn exhibits greater extremes than one would suspect from the weather records. So good lawngresses have to be exceptionally hardy, perennial and enduring under a wide range of conditions. When planting a lawn, it makes sense to insist upon quality seed of reliable, proven varieties.

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Winter Kill Attributed to Dry Autumn

Parts of the United States have suffered two exceedingly dry autumns in a row. A number of ornamentals may have been weakened, and failure this spring will likely be attributed to "winter kill."

In most cases, lawns recover nicely from drought—at least if they contain reliable perennial grasses. But even Kentucky bluegrass and fine fescues can suffer winter damage if there has not been enough moisture in autumn for them to green up.

Fortunately, early winter mostly has been mild, letting rain or melting snow soak into a thawed soil. We can be more optimistic than we were last November.

Winter damage is seldom due to cold. Bluegrasses, fescues and bent grasses are not bothered until soil temperatures get down nearly to zero, almost never the case in any of the states except Alaska.

Rather, drying-out, and possibly disease, cause winter injury. There is less desiccation in

Mums Grow Best In Sandy Soil

Chrysanthemums should be planted after danger of killing frost has ended. Plant either small plants taken from rooted cuttings or divisions or rooted suckers of old plants.

Chrysanthemums like well-drained sandy loam soil and good sun. The plants will tend to be taller and bloom later if set in shade.

Mix peat moss, compost or well-rotted barnyard manure and super phosphate (3-5 pounds per 100 square feet) to the soil. If you use peat moss do not add organic matter.

Instead use a commercial fertilizer such as 5-10-5 in the spring. Add a side dressing of a complete fertilizer in August. Pinch the tips to induce branching and stockier growth when the plant has reached a height of 6 inches. Water adequately and spray with an all-purpose insecticide-fungicide twice a month through the summer.

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