

DOWN TO EARTH

By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Nuggets of Wisdom for Good Lawns

"Easy Does It" would be a good title for a garden class or garden study program, because, if gardening ceases to be challenging and relaxing, and creates no feeling of achievement, then its time to pick up your marbles and delegate this fine interest to others.

Don't sell gardening short, return to it later, as it has so much to offer as a stabilizer to the "real you." We go through various cycles in our lives when our interests gravitate from one center to another. What dull people we would be if we stayed on one beam all of our lives.

WHEN YOU tackle your Spring gardening program, try taking it easy and complete one area at a time instead of darting around. One should use his head to save steps in gardening as well as in other pursuits.

The other day my garden columnist, Jack Ball, talked to the garden class about spring lawn care. The nuggets of wisdom were so good. Here they are for you to share.

There are four steps in maintaining a lawn and they are given in the order of their importance: fertilizer, mowing, watering and seeding.

The worst act Mrs. Burlingame can do in lawn care is to go over the surface with a heavy metal rake. It removes the old grass, which is an asset to keep the ground cool, causes the surface to dry out and exposes the lawn seed to sun and believe me, that is what they like for a perfect growing condition. If you must "so exercise," use a light leaf rake when you remove twigs and surface rubbish.

"What about rolling, Mr. Ball?" The only time to roll a lawn is when the ground is dry. Otherwise, if the ground is wet or moist, you compact the soil which does endless harm and the surface is often closed to moisture and air which is important for root growth.

"What can we do about crab grass control?" The first week in May use a spray of Chloradane and it will kill 90% of the seeds of crab grass the first year. In May follow up with a control spray.

WITH THE heavy equipment most maintenance companies use it is not necessary to roll your lawn as it has sufficient weight on it with the routine mowing.

When you fertilize use a formula of 10-6-4 in your package and you will get the best buy for your money and your lawn will have the best food. It is essential to apply root feeding fertilizer in March, June and September. If you wish to use fall feeding for the other months that is the frosting on the cake and will give you a well rounded picture.

Frequent mowings where you cut off only one inch is good and you should allow the clippings to fall on the ground and feed the roots as future mulch. Set your mower at 2" and insist that your lawn service use this practice.

WATERING practice is important. For Kentucky blue grass only, water thoroughly once a week to assure the roots of growing deep. In case of warm weather water the lawn every five days. One inch of water is sufficient and Mr. Ball suggests placing a tin can out where you are watering to measure the amount.

As for seeding, use fescue with Kentucky blue grass where you have traffic or wear. If you have an adult use lawn use only Kentucky blue for easiest maintenance and maximum satisfaction for this area.

We thank you, Mr. Ball, for your "chat".

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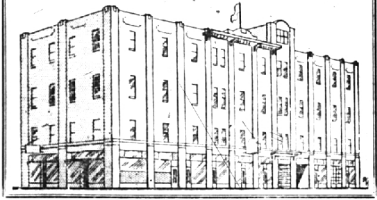
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We call one who "falls for" an April Fool trick a "poor fish" perhaps because fish "bite on" anything. Few fishermen will agree with that. French, however, call a victim of clowning in poisson d'Avril or April Fish.

Reason dates to reform of French calendar in 1564, when

New Year's Day became January 1, instead of April 1. New Year's celebration included exchange of gifts, much like Christmas. Moderates laughed those who protested calendar change, sent them mock gifts, invited them to phony festivities on April First.

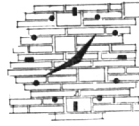
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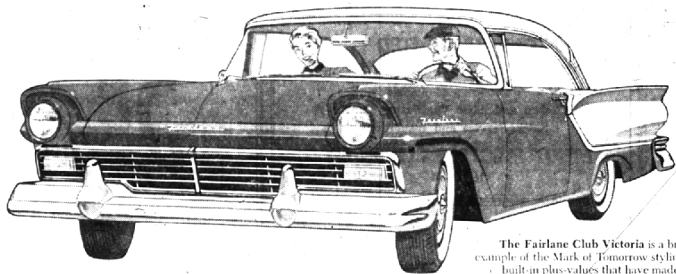


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