

Value of Rolling

Much argument centres at present around the subject of rolling lawns. Many reasons for rolling have been put forward from time to time, the chief ones being to firm the soil about the grass roots and to encourage capillary action in bringing up water supplies from the soil below the plant roots. In the colder inland parts of New Zealand where frosts are frequent and severe during winter, rolling for the first reason would seem fully justified and is recommended during early spring.

**Rolling does not, as many people believe, level uneven surfaces, but simply brings about uneven soil conditions which ultimately result in a patchy turf. For levelling out depressions there is no substitute for topdressing.**

If a roller is used, its weight need not be more than 150lb. Under most conditions a roller heavier than this causes the surface to become hard and almost impervious to water.

Aeration of Turf

On well-constructed lawns it is not often necessary to assist aeration of the turf by artificial means. However, the soil of many lawns is hard and impervious and the turf is failing to maintain a healthy condition. In such cases deep spiking with a garden fork may do much to improve the situation. The tines of the fork are pushed as far into the ground as they will go, wriggled a little to make the holes wider, and withdrawn. This allows rapid penetration of air and water, as well as allowing fertilisers to reach the grass roots more quickly.

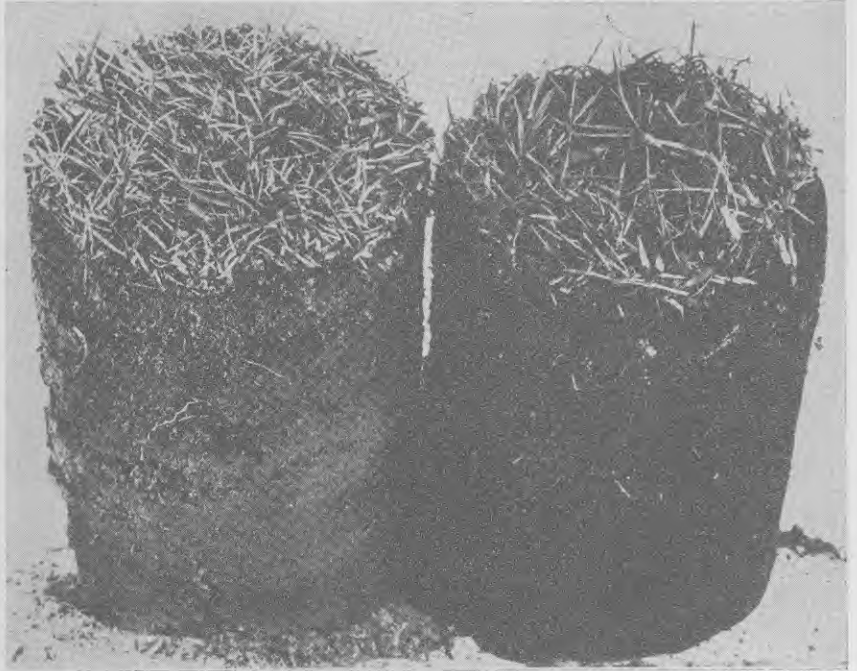
A wide range of spiking and coring machines is manufactured for use in the aeration and general improvement of larger areas of grass.

Watering Lawns

Watering is probably the most important factor in maintaining a good lawn. Without adequate water lawn grasses will not thrive. Admittedly, established grasses do not seem to be permanently injured by periods of drought, but during those periods they do look unsightly, and the only way to have a good green lawn throughout the year is to water it regularly during dry spells.

When watering becomes necessary it is essential that it be done thoroughly. All too often the gardener plays a hose over the lawn and imagines that in 5 minutes he has done some good, whereas in fact he need not do this very often to cause quite a measurable degree of harm. Light watering moistens only the uppermost soil region and, because of the presence of water, the grass roots tend to develop there and are not encouraged to penetrate more deeply. The condition gradually deteriorates until all the roots are in the uppermost inch or so of soil, and the turf loses almost entirely its resistance to drought and suffers at the slightest dry spell.

**A lawn which is being watered should always receive enough water to wet the soil to a depth of at least 6in. In this way the grass roots are kept well down in the soil and water need not be applied so frequently.**



[From "Practical Lawn Craft," by R. B. Dawson (Crosby Lockwood and Son, Ltd., London).]

The benefits to turf of aeration. Above—The sample on the left was taken from unforked turf and that on the right from immediately round a fork hole. Below—The development of new roots in a fork hole.

