

Gardening

PLEASE ACCEPT MY apologies for missing my effort in the last issue of the Wychwood – I was on the sick list. The outcome is that I have been banned from all ladder work and I am down at ground level among the weeds!

To grow good lawns two things are necessary above all others. They are aeration and nourishment. When you have got these right then you can deal with the elimination of weeds and other refinements. And let me say right away that with proper and effective aeration and feeding, moss is unlikely to occur.

Few of us have the machinery to tine, slit and scarify, that is, to do all that which is necessary to get air into the surface soil and the roots. It is possible to hire machinery to do this work but the expense may be prohibitive especially as most of us have relatively small areas of grass. The cost could be spread if a few neighbours get together, programmed work over a weekend and shared the devices.

However, most of us will scarify using a garden rake, a spring rake or the tool designed for the purpose. Wear gloves otherwise you will blister your hands, particularly at the inside root of the thumb. You need to remove thatch, that accumulation of dead grass and roots at or just to below the surface. Hard work but it does wonders for your grass.

You will tear up a piece of turf from time time but don't worry, just tread it back in, it will benefit.

Through mowing, children playing and adults just walking, the surface of the lawn becomes compacted and once more air is denied. Tining is required and this can be done with a garden fork pierced in to a depth of about three inches and worked backwards and forwards. The holes should be at intervals of about three inches. Hard work but worthwhile.

There are many fertilisers available and you should do what it says on the bag. Some gardeners use a general fertiliser such as Growmore and give a dressing in the autumn and again in spring.

A reminder.

In the August / September issue I dealt with the pruning of soft fruits such as black, red and white currants and gooseberries. This work should be completed as soon as possible – so should the pruning.

Another reminder.

Are all your bulbs planted?

A happy Christmas to you all and my annual suggestion for a table decoration. A ball of clay on a plate with sprigs of holly stuck into it and a lovely red candle in the middle.

Until 2000,

A.V.Mitchell

We have had some lovely gardening weather in November. May I make a special plea for trees and shrubs overhanging pavements to be trimmed back to remove the danger to pedestrians. Thank you. (Ed.)