

Neat Lawns Seem to Be Contagious

BECAUSE of the mild winter and early spring, homeowners have had the privilege of three or four extra lawn mowings already this season, a joy denied condominium owners and apartment dwellers.

In nearly every block, however, there seems to be someone who doesn't realize the grass is green and who is raising a crop of weed seed that could sprout in hundreds by summer showers. Oklahoma winds will help him share these weed seeds with neighbors.

Perhaps this non-mowing attitude is intentional, even if not beautiful. Last year one lawn rebel listed his reasons for not mowing. He claimed mowing wastes fuel, consumes human energy, removes air-purifying greenery, disturbs butterflies and bumblebees, and results in mower accidents that sever fingers and toes.

A few years ago, while consumer activists were riding high in Washington, it looked like we might have a set of regulations to tell us how and when to mow our lawns. The bureaucrats didn't get that far, al-

though they did boost the prices of mowers and lawn equipment by specifying safety devices, shields and warning labels.

Faced with the choice of laying off loyal campaign supporters or keeping city property mowed, city governments normally are somewhat lax in keeping down dandelions and weeds. That hasn't deterred officials from urging private owners to cut weeds on their properties.

They have more leverage for getting that done than parents have available to persuade teen-age sons. Cities may hire private contractors to mow tall grass and weeds if owners fail to do so and costs may be added to property taxes. This probably isn't the most economical way to get grass and weeds cut.

The only way to have a beautiful neighborhood or a beautiful city is for each property owner to maintain a neat homestead.

Good maintenance seems to be contagious, apparently with "peer pressure" to follow the custom. Homeowners who have nice lawns

and trees help to motivate others to do likewise. Those who neglect their yards may cause tired neighbors to ask "What's the use?"

At this time of year there always is a considerable number of people who hit their yards with a whirlwind of enthusiasm but don't know what to do with grass clippings and trash they accumulate.

Instead of putting them at the curb for garbage trucks to haul away, they drive around the countryside until they think no one is looking and dump their trash along roadsides or on someone's property. This is illegal but you seldom read of anyone being prosecuted and convicted for doing it.

Objectionable as trash dumping is, citizens might prefer that police devote their time to chasing burglars, thieves and other felons.

The early season apparently has caught garden experts by surprise. Some are still telling how to start gardens. Experienced vegetable growers will tell you if you aren't eating out of your garden by now, you had just as well forget it for 1981!