4. Moss control
TRADITIONALLY a topdressing of lawn sand is put down as a cultural method for controlling moss in lawns, the caustic action of the added ingredient sulphate of ammonia, means that moss, and often other weeds, are burnt off. Specific brands will give exact application rates, but a generous handful per square yard is a good general rule of thumb. Water the sand into the lawn before walking across it or wait for rain to do the job for you. The dead moss then needs to be raked off of the lawn. These are autumn jobs but if moss is a problem do not wait to tackle it.

5. Weeds
BROADLEAF WEEDS such as dandelions and daisies can be brought quickly under control with a selective lawn weedkiller. Make sure the product you buy is designed for specific use with lawns, otherwise big problems could occur. A broad spectrum herbicide such as glyphosate will wipe out your lawn along with the weeds. So use something like Bayer Advanced Lawn Weedkiller, which controls all common broadleaved lawn weeds.

6. First cut
OLD GARDENING books stipulated that you shouldn’t cut the lawn during February, as the soil is usually too wet, and all you are doing is compacting the soil as you walk around it. I subscribe to the alternative theory that...if the grass has grown long, cut it!
Mild weather can cause grass to put on growth, so keep the lawnmower in readiness. In a mild winter this may mean cutting even in December or January. A winter cut, or the season’s first cut, should consist of a light trim, so set mower blades on the highest setting.

7. New lawns
IF YOU want to lay a new lawn from turf at the start of the season, it should be done by the end of March for successful establishment. Unlike autumn laying, a new spring lawn will have to be backed up with heavy watering to ensure it survives through its first summer.
Similarly, sowing a new lawn from seed will need a little more attention at this time of year and will take up to two weeks longer before shoots start to appear. Protect the seedlings from hungry birds by covering the area with clear plastic (raised slightly) or wire netting.

8. Patches
FILL IN patchy areas of the lawn by raking out any dead growth and tilling the uncovered soil. New seed can then be sown across the space. Getting perfect results can be a challenge, particularly in shady or sun-exposed situations. Help is at hand from a new product from the Scotts Company. Miracle-Gro Patch Magic (see p27) is a combination of grass seed, Miracle-Gro plant food and coir that expands to surround and protect the seed.

9. Edging
A LAWN with overgrown edges is a real eyesore. If the standard of the current edges is sound, with decent, vertical sides, then all you will need to do is make a big difference to the appearance is to give the edges a trim with a pair of sharp edging shears.
However if the edges have collapsed or been worn down in places, then you need to use a half-moon edging iron to cut and create new vertical sides. In the case of a straight-sided lawn, a plank of wood is useful as a guide and is handy to stand on if the soil is wet.

10. Feeding
A GOOD feed is needed early in the season if the lawn is to stand up to regular mowing. Feeding your lawn will help the grass to stay healthy, lush and green throughout the year, but the right lawn feed is crucial for good results. Look for spring feeds with a high concentration of nitrogen to encourage vigorous leaf growth and good colour.
Nitrogen is the first nutrient to be depleted by a lawn. Look out for added potash in your spring feed as this will toughen the lawn and help it stand up to drought and disease.
You will have the choice of choosing between a liquid, powder (water soluble) or granular feed. Liquid and water soluble feeds will reach the grass roots faster than granular feeds, but the rain can wash them away just as quick. I always recommend a slow release granular feed.