It took an entire division to replace George Vasey, who died in 1893. In 1895, Congress established the USDA Division of Agrostology “for the investigation of the native and foreign fodder plants.” The division’s first research was conducted in two “grass gardens,” one on the grounds of the Department in Washington, DC, and the other in Knoxville, Tennessee. The garden in DC predated the Division of Agrostology, and already contained “four hundred species, native and foreign” in 1895. In Knoxville, the grass garden occupied 8 ½ acres on the grounds of the Agricultural Experiment Station.

The Division of Agrostology hired field agents to collect grasses throughout the United States. These agents collected specimens of seeds, live roots and sod and sent them to division headquarters in DC. Grass specimens were added to the National Herbarium at a clipping pace – to the 15,000 sheets of mounted grass specimens in the Herbarium collection in 1895, the staff of the Division added almost 25,000 sheets by 1900. Correspondents sent specimens to the Herbarium for identification, and the correspondence amounted to as many as 4,000 inquiries per year.

Even as early as 1895, it was recognized that identifying grasses with value for turf formation in lawns was of value for the public. In a 1896 Division of Agrostology Bulletin, Agrostologist F. Lamson-Scribner listed sixteen of the most important grasses for lawns. Lamson-Scribner’s essay “Lawns and Lawn Making” was featured in the 1897 Yearbook of the USDA, in which he acknowledged that “How to establish lawns and the varieties of grasses best suited for the purpose are among the most frequent inquiries received by the Division of Agrostology.” The advice he proceeded to dispense was from submissions to a circular of inquiry that were sent to “superintendents of public parks and others known to be engaged in this work” from “Maine to Washington and southward to Florida, Texas and Southern California.”

Over the years that the Division of Agrostology’s grass garden in Washington, D.C. existed, reports from the division consistently reported that this garden, with its almost 500 varieties of grasses and forage plants, “attracted much public attention, particularly in its exhibition of grasses suitable for lawns.” In 1898, Lamson-Scribner wrote of this garden:

“Visitors to the city of Washington from all parts of the country have been much interested in what it was possible to see and learn here [at the grass garden]. Lawn grasses have been grown in considerable variety, each being treated in a way to show its special value for lawns. Many varieties of grasses from the East, from the South, and especially from the West, have been grown here with success, and it is interesting to note the peculiar habits of the grasses of the moist and wooded...
regions of the East and those of the arid, treeless regions of the West, as displayed in this garden, where they may be seen growing side by side."\textsuperscript{10}