

God and the Suburbanites

Imagine the conversation the Creator might have had with St. Francis on the subject of lawns.

God: St. Francis, you know all about gardens and nature, what in the world is going on down there in Florida? What happened to all the dandelions, violets, thistles and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect, no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honeybees, and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But all I see are these green rectangles.

St. Francis: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers weeds and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

God: Grass? But it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds, and bees, only grubs and sod worms; it's temperamental with temperatures. Do these suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

St. Francis: Apparently so Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it. They begin each spring by fertilizing the grass and poisoning any other plant that appears in the lawn.

God: The spring rains and warm weather probably make the grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

St. Francis: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little they cut it, sometimes once a week.

God: They cut it? Do they bale it like hay? Is it a cash crop?

St. Francis: Not exactly Lord.

God: Now let me get this straight. They fertilize the grass so it will grow, and when it does grow, they cut it?

St. Francis: Yes sir.

God: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth of the grass and saves them a lot of work!

St. Francis: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so quickly, they pay to have an irrigation system installed so they can continue to cut it. They don't even turn off that irrigation system during rainy seasons!

God: What nonsense! At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn the leaves fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. Plus, as they rot, the leaves and pine needles form compost to enrich the soil. It's a natural circle of life.

St. Francis: You had better sit down Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves and pine needles fall, they rake them into great piles and place them in bags. Then they place them on the curb to have them hauled away.

God: Seriously? What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter and to keep the soil moist and loose?

St. Francis: After getting rid of the leaves and pine needles, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in the place of leaves and pine needles.

God: Hmmm... and where do they get this mulch?

St. Francis: They cut down trees.

God: I don't want to think about this anymore. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

St. Francis: "Dumb and Dumber" Lord. It's a real stupid movie about...

God: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story.