**Landscaping**

**Agriculture consumes 80 percent of the water in the seven states that depend on the Colorado River. Other water usage in the region – including all the flushing toilets, showers, dishwashers, washing machines, drinking water, and the watering of parks and golf courses in the Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Las Vegas metropolitan areas – accounts for 10 percent. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 16, 2023)***

**Over a century, from around the 1870s to the 1970s, Americans slowly fell in love with lawns. Lawns were a sign of taste, calm, power, privilege, order and discipline, especially in the aftermath of World War II. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**But lawn has become a liability – or, in some cases, an asset on the condition of its removal. California’s main water utility is paying customers between $2 and $5 for each square foot of living turf that they remove. Last year Nevada outlawed certain types of lawn, or, rather, the state legislature prohibited the use of water from the dribbling Colorado River to feed certain types of “nonfunctional turf,” which in southern Nevada slurps up to 12 billion gallons of water every year (more than 10% of the state’s usage of the river). The law created a committee to sort “functional” turf from “nonfunctional”; discussions were had about how to categorize “pet relief” areas and “wedding lawns at golf courses.” Before the law passed, Sun City Anthem, an active-adult community in Henderson, Nevada, had already removed almost 40,000 square feet of grass, which nearly halved its water bill. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**We are still, largely, lawn people. The biggest irrigated crop, by area, in the United States? Not corn or soybeans, but lawn. Unproductive, ornamental lawn: around 40 million acres of it, or 2% of the land area of the Lower 48, according to multiple estimates cited by Garik Gutman, program manager for NASA’s Land-Cover/Land-Use Change Program. Forty million acres: The entire state of Georgia couldn’t contain America’s total lawnage. And we pour 9 billion gallons of water on landscaping every day, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**Our lawns use 10 times more fertilizer – which releases nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas, – than our agricultural crops. Those fertilizers leach into wetlands, rivers and oceans, creating algae blooms that deoxygenate water, causing fish to die. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**Look, some people hoist a flag to show they love our country. Well, my lawn is my flag. (*Hank Hill, fictional Texas propane salesman, in 1997)***

**Im 2018, gas-powered lawn mowers, leaf blowers and other garden equipment guzzled almost 3 billion gallons of gas in the United States, roughly the same amount as 6 million passenger cars driven in a year. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**I’ve definitely noticed in the past few years that so many people around my age are getting into gardening, and taking their lawns and turning them into gardens. *(Mel Bryant, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**Wasn’t there something a bit decadent about millions of Americans applying million of pounds of fertilizer and pouring millions of gallons of water on the ground to grow something you couldn’t eat unless you were a Jersey cow? *Ellen Goodman, columnist, in The Boston Globe, in 1977)***

**“It contributes nothing,” homeowner M.J. Veverka says about her lawn, which she’s watered and weeded and mowed and toiled over for 31 years – and for what? The lawn is static, nonfunctional, tedious. Last year Veverka filled in her backyard pool, removed the surrounding lawn and enlisted Mattei’s company to turn the space into an oasis of native plants, a “homegrown national park,” in the words of a grassroots movement for regenerating biodiversity. Veverka so loves the backyard – which is now an evolving work of horticultural art and a functioning component of the surrounding ecosystem – that she wants to do the same thing with her front yard. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**On the American front lawn men use power machinery and chemicals, the tools of war, to engage in a battle for supremacy with Mother Nature. *(Virginia Scott Jenkins, in The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession)***

**Nothing holds up to foot traffic and hard use like turfgrass. Lawns also provide visual relief, a place for the eye to rest while it digests all the botanical awesomeness around it. *(Dave Marciniak, in Reader’s Digest)***

**The 80 million pounds of pesticides and herbicides we add to our lawns each year also disrupt the food chain, killing helpful insects and plants. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**Running a lawn mower for an hour emits the same amount of pollution as driving a car 45 miles. Gas-powered lawn and garden equipment produces up to 5% of our country’s air pollution. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**This popular writer who analyzes how cultures interact with nature said, "A lawn is nature under totalitarian rule." - Michael Pollan*. (The Daily Chronicle)***

**Watering a lawn for an hour uses more than a 1,000 gallons of water. That adds up to 9 billion gallons a day across the country and makes turfgrass our country’s single largest irrigated crop – this, while more than half of the lower 48 states were in a drought at the end of last summer. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest), March/April, 2023)***

**I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.*(Walt Whitman, wrote of “Grass” in 1855)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Larry Fossan, facilities manager and landscape supervisor, replaced the lawn with xeriscaping: native plants from lantana. cactuses. Mexican feathergrass. Last year on the property Fossan saw something he’d never seen before in Nevada: monarch butterflies, about 25 of them, migrating through. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

**Xeriscaping is a fancy word for a yard that needs little to no water to stay alive. These are popular in desert areas but can be made elsewhere. They often include a mix of drought tolerant plants like cactuses, agave and bright yellow rabbitbrush, plus rocks, gravel and mulch. *(Dan Zak, in Reader’s Digest, March/April, 2023)***

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