

Source unknown, but thank you.

GOD:

Francis, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweeds and stuff I started eons ago? I had the most 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, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colours by now, but all I see are these green rectangles everywhere.

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 is so boring. It's not colourful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees; only grubs and soil worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

FRANCIS:

Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilising grass and poisoning any other plants that crops up in the lawn which they call "weeds".

GOD:

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

FRANCIS:

Apparently not, Lord. After it grows a little, they get someone to cut it - sometimes twice a week.

GOD:

What??? They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay for animal food?

FRANCIS:

Not exactly, Lord. Most of them put it in bags.

GOD:

They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

FRANCIS:

No Sir, just the opposite. They pay to get someone to take it away.

GOD:

Now, let me get this straight. Do they fertilise grass so it will grow more, and when it does, they pay someone to cut it off and pay to get rid of it?

FRANCIS:

Yes Sir.

GOD:

These Suburbanites must be very relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat for the plants to seed for the future. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

FRANCIS:

You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out their hoses and pay more money to water it, so they can continue to mow it and then pay to get rid of it.

GOD:

Unbelievable! 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, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil, feed earthworms, and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

FRANCIS:

You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

GOD:

You can't be serious! What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

FRANCIS:

After throwing away all the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call "mulch". They haul it home and spread it around trees in place of the leaves.

GOD:

Where do they get this "mulch"?

FRANCIS:

They buy it from the people who get the tree branches and clippings that were cut down and the leaves that fell, which they grind up to sell as mulch.

GOD:

How many acres do the lawns cover down there?

FRANCIS:

In USA there are 55,000,000 acres of lawns which leach more nitrogen per acre than pastures.

GOD:

I give up.

### **Addition by Vaughan Jones**

We must give up too, because of the many questionable things today in many countries, like the mechanical harvesting of pasture and crops for confinement feeding of beef and dairy cows at a cost of 40 cents/kg of dry matter, when grazing averages half that, then cleaning up after them and spreading it which is not necessary with grazing. Then there is dry animal manure blown across public roads from beef feedlots in some countries but not in New Zealand.

In USA it takes 1,100 litres of oil to rear and transport a beef animal to maturity, reported with photos in National Geographic of June 2004.

In New Zealand it is less than 100 litres, most for mining lime and fertilisers, and applying them, and transporting the cattle once only, to an abattoir not far away.

I could go on, but will never win because some men love driving tractors (and cars and trucks of course) which pollute the air so people and animals become unwell which makes work for veterinarians, the number of which has doubled in the last 50 years.