



# BROOKLYN\_BORN

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## A city girl goes country (Part 5) - Taking pride in your lawn (or not)

Friday, May 10, 2013

Between the city and the country, we did our time in suburbia. The house was more important to us than the yard, but the yard and a lot of grass were part of the deal.

An old friend sent me this picture.



It reminded me of our suburban years as did this article.

"Taking pride in your lawn"

[realestate.msn.com](http://realestate.msn.com)

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[e-perfect-lawn](#)

We did some of those things recommended by the author, at least for a short time. The house we bought did not have a beautiful lawn. So we contracted for "Chem Lawn" a company that soon changed their name to something more environmentally correct, although I doubt that they changed their product.

This was our first experience with a "homeowners' association" and we were trying to fit in. The chemicals did their job all right, all too well. The grass kept growing and growing and needed more mowing and mowing. So we stopped "feeding" it. Soon we had clover and other types of stuff (weeds?) along with the grass. That was fine with us. It was green and as long as we kept it mowed the association didn't bother us either. We also planted a lot of bushes and trees – anything to reduce the amount of grass.

Now we have a lawn that looks like this section.

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Birds and assorted critters like our place.

These berries grow wild



I thought they might be wild strawberries. Hmm, no. I'm told that they're inedible "snake berries." I still have much more to learn.

I think the USA leads the world in lawn acreage. Since retirement we've been traveling a lot, many times to Europe. We've observed lots of gardens, but not a lot of lawns. Perhaps the time, effort and money we put into our perfect lawns could be better spent elsewhere?

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**FANGFACEKITTY**

When my parents retired they landscaped a rock garden with many shrubs, small trees, and perennials that are pretty self sustaining, so no watering or fertilizing. It looks wonderful and is very low maintenance.

2951 days ago



**WELLBEING67**

Our lawn has lovely (gasp) dandelions in it. They have such a beautiful golden color on gray spring days. Better yet, the guinea pigs love to eat the green leaves which are a great source of vitamin C. Needless to say we don't allow weed killer on our lawn. It doesn't look quite as perfect

as the neighboring lawns, but no poisons are entering the watershed, either.

2956 days ago



**MERRYMARY42**

as expensive as water is anymore, we do not have the lovely lawn that we once did, my water is used on my fruits and vegetables.





2956 days ago



**CD13777271**

I'm right with you on lawns and xerascaping. But our HOA is particular. We live in a water conservation area though. So to meet regs we planted a native grass that needs only 6 inches of water a year. The critters love it especially the rabbits, the HOA and neighbors are happy. And to add to the plus we only have to mow once a month in the summer, good times. Meanwhile the neighbors are watering late at night so they won't be caught and fined. And having to mow their lawns every week with their high maintenance grasses. Its crazy.

2956 days ago



**BOILHAM**

I'm with you on this one. As long as it's green, it's a lawn. I used to have a really nice St. Augustine grass lawn, but over the years, it has gotten to be in poor shape. The oak trees grew up and covered my beloved grass in shade and tree roots. Still it looks okay to me. "Good enough is good enough" you know I love to say that, Eileen.

-Vic-

2956 days ago



**IONA72**

Here in England there is a LOT of Lawn Obsession, but not, I hasten to add, by us. With our climate it looks okay most of the time. I love all the wild flowers that crop up in our "green area" and never put a chemical near it.

2956 days ago



**CD13227574**

Lawn? Just another breakfast, lunch, and dinner buffet for the local deer population. On the other hand, they would also be mowing and self fertilizing, so maintenance on my part is nil!

2957 days ago



**1FARMER**

I can't agree with you more. Americans need to rethink the waste of water and the use of the chemicals all for something that isn't edible. If we put it on our lawns if ends up in the water

supply. Great blog!  
2957 days ago

THANK YOU!

Jeanne

I ♥ SP



**WILSONWR**

Absolutely! And those nice lawns usually come with a price to the environment!

2957 days ago



**DR1939**

In Poland they did not mow their lawns. They just let it grow. In India we saw them mowing with a mower pulled by bullocks. They also swept the dirt areas of the lawns.

2957 days ago



**DESERTJULZ**

Ack, I hate grass lawns. What is the point? I do have grass in the backyard, to give the dogs a place to play around. Gardens & desert landscaping (or whatever is natural to your geographical location) make more sense.

2957 days ago



**\_LINDA**

My Mom hates lawn and over 20 years has been slowly digging it up, replacing it with a gorgeous rock garden with a mixture of shrub, perennials and annuals. My step is grateful as he has less to mow. But because he lives in a ritzy neighbourhood -the requirement is to keep it looking good and he does fertilize. The best would be to have a total xeroscape -a low maintenance rock and gravel and hardy shrubs and perennials, very little care needed. I have read that lawns can have several different species to create an overall look and that clover was included to help with something but I can't remember what lol. Looks like the clover has proven to be more hardy then the grass!

Good luck with it!

2957 days ago



**HAYBURNER1969**

Like 1935Mary, I also have a lot of Johnson grass in my country yard, and it finds its way into my garden as well. Gah! But I wouldn't spend money on chemicals to treat my 1+ acre. We've got a lot of clover, which the rabbits seem to like.

Thank you to Giniemie for sharing that organic weed killer recipe. I might try it in my garden. I also have an organic pesticide/deterrent I'm going to try. That recipe is here:  
I think I'll try the "combination" one at the end.

-Soapy Water: Any biodegradable liquid soap will do. Use about 1/4 cup of soap per gallon of water, and rinse the plants with clean water an hour or so after you spray them so the soap doesn't burn their leaves.



- Oily Water: Blend about 1/4 cup canola or olive oil with one gallon of water and spray on plants. Remember to shake the spray bottle frequently to keep things mixed up.

- Hot Pepper Spray: Puree 4 or 5 chili peppers with a gallon of water, strain, and spray. This is even more effective if you let the puree age for a day or so before you strain and use it.

- Garlic Spray: Puree a head of garlic with a gallon of water, strain, and spray. This won't kill existing bugs, but it is a great deterrent.

Combination Spray: Be creative! For instance, a chili-garlic-oil spray will kill existing bugs and deter future ones. An oil-soap spray is a double-whammy bug killer with a built-in emulsifier.  
2957 days ago



#### CELIAMINER

DH and I dislike "better living through chemistry," so we let our lawn go the way it wants to go. Unfortunately, we do have a homeowners association, but I did my part by getting elected to the board ;-)



2957 days ago



#### -SHOREIDO-

Green Eye candy!! : ) Sure. Make the neighborhood look all dressed and pretty. Sure, why not!! But not getting the home owners assoc thing.....get those guys off your back. Sounds like they're real good at stressing folks out....  
PS



Love the smell of fresh cut grass!! Have a great week-end!  
2957 days ago



#### MISCHAKEO

Also we have a high percentage of golf courses which also use chemicals and water!

Enjoy your yard!!!  
2957 days ago



#### SWEETNEEY

interesting  
2957 days ago



#### FITMOMINNJ

Well Done!  
2957 days ago



#### GINIEMIE

I'm anti-lawn chemicals, but living in a subdivision means we have to conform or be fined. so...My raised beds are filled with dirt and composted Alpaca manure that I get from a friend with a goat/alpaca farm. I do not use chemicals other than dish soap for some of the bugs, beer in caps for slugs and other Rodale Press suggestions from years ago. Unfortunately our HOA is anti Solar panels, artificial turf, which would at least alleviate the need for chemicals and changes in the landscaping w/o prior permission.

I just found a weed killer made with 1/2 gallon cider Vinegar, 1/2 tsp of Dawn and 1/4 c. table salt. and squirt it on the weeds. I'm trying it on the dandelions and crab grass soon.



2957 days ago



#### WATERMELLEN

I'm anti-lawn: our "lawn" is comprised of stone crop, creeping thyme, clover, violets, dandelions, and various naturalized bulbs including scylla, grape hyacinths etc. Pretty!! Not applying chemicals: no herbicides, no pesticides (the skunks love the grubs).

Uniculture is totalitarian.

So there it is. Too bad, so sad for all those (and yup, there have been some vocalizations!) who don't like it.

2957 days ago



#### NANNABLACK

GREAT!  
2957 days ago



#### 1935MARY

Living in the country I knew right away that those was snake berries.. I have seen them all my





life. One thing about grass it grows and grows, along with everything else. We have allot of Johnson grass it is a nightmare grows in clumps tall and thick and is a very tough grass . Enjoy your retirement . People with perfect yards spends tons of money on them and time or pays someone else to take care of them. Have a great day.  
2957 days ago



**ONEKIDSMOM**

Believe it or not this topic has been on my mind. As I biked through suburbia yesterday I saw couples out manicuring their perfect lawns.

I am NOT a lawn OR a garden person, dislike being out "taking care of " plants. My guilt over "not fitting in" drives what little I do. Perhaps it's the allergies talking. BUT, whatever the reason, the message to me was "grow a backbone". It's OK to be YOU.

And it's probably better for the planet to NOT chem our lawns if we have them.  
2957 days ago



**CD13886868**

I tend to agree with you. We live on a small farm and most of the acres are in crops, but my husband goes crazy with the lawn that's left over. Little by little we're planting shrubs and trees, anything to take up the grass. The best part is that we've tilled under a pretty large part of it to expand the garden. But yeah, \$\$ spent on greening the lawn could probably be spent better elsewhere.  
2957 days ago



**COCK-ROBIN**

Wonderful!

2957 days ago

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