

Lawn Wars

My neighbor is evil

Lawn-styles

I ask folks if they know their neighbors. Usually “We barely know the person next door” or even “We don't talk to the people next door”. A few stray comments got me to noticing that neighborly antagonism can be based on lawn-styles. Please let me introduce you to each other.

- Manicured
- Lush Garden
- Work Yard
- Junk yard

Manicured

Crisply cut lawn, all one species of grass, uniformly green, uniformly cut to carefully considered height, edges neatly trimmed. No one ever actually walks on the lawn – it is to be admired. Vigorously thatched, trimmed, aerated, watered, limed, fertilized, herbicided, and pesticed..

Thinks the others lack moral fiber. If you can't maintain it, don't have a yard. [My dad took this to the ultimate at his house in Renton: Asphalt, AstroTurf, and plastic deck planking. Not a blade of grass anywhere to be seen. The tree out front was plastic.]

Lush Garden

No lawn at all. Ground cover between lush blossoming herbs and bushes, set with potted plants carefully rotated in and out of the sun. Bird bath, hummingbird feeders. A couple of Adirondack chairs to appreciate the butterflies and humming birds. A cat idly watching the birds – and catching one now and then followed by hue-and-cry from the gardener.

Is horrified at the manicured yard with its never ending trimming and poisons (“Why are they torturing plants? Don't they care about beneficial insects?”). Thinks the working yard is an opportunity for potted plants on dollies, and thinks the junk yard is an eco-disaster needing restoration.

Working Yard

The motto is “I'm raising kids, not grass”. Tough grass with a few thin spots. Short enough to play on, but not so short it dies in a drought. Kids playing tag/football/baseball/war. If you need to scrape the boat hull, you lay out a tarp and set up sawhorses.

Thinks the manicured lawn is prissy, the lush garden is too fragile for actually living, and junk yard needs a good weekend with a pickup truck and a brush-hog.

Junk Yard

Rusting car chassis on cinder blocks, waist high grass, brambles and dandelions taking charge. Bare spots eroding in heavy rains. No one plans this yard. It is usually a working yard that has been neglected. The neglect is often due to medical issues. Sometimes the rusted hulks are actually spare parts for car restoration projects (my father-in-law had about 30 partial Morris Minors in his side field).

Aspires to be working yard. But can't do it and can't afford a professional crew. Maybe could provide some lemonade and cookies if neighbors wanted to help. Too insular or curmudgeonly to ask.