

# Destroy Your Lawn!

*Why America's obsession sucks  
and what you can do to fix it*



## A History of Lawns

The history of the largest crop by area in the United States is a recent one. It starts with the enclosure of the commons in the 1600's. After taking vast tracts of lands from the peasants, the aristocrats of England and France decided to show off. Their lawns of vast swaths of turf grass, unused by either agriculture or grazing, requiring constant care from former peasants, was the ultimate showing off of power and wealth.

This trend was soon transported to their colonies, where George Washington's and Thomas Jefferson's manicured lawns were kept by their slaves. As colonist cattle devoured native grasses, colonists brought over European grasses which crowded out their indigenous counterparts. This subtle change helped the wider project of destroying ecosystems that had been built and maintained by indigenous people to starve them out.

The lawn's presence in America grew and grew, but exploded with the suburban boom of the 1950's, where it came to represent white conformity. Even today, cops arrest, jail, and even kill people over not having manicured lawns.

**Guerrilla Gardening:** Guerrilla Gardening is simply planting plants into lawn you're not legally allowed to, such as vacant or abandoned lots. The trend started in New York City in the 1970's to reclaim derelict spaces and has exploded as a trend from there. This ranges from seed bombing to tearing up vacant concrete lots and planting community gardens. Needless to say that guerrilla gardening is inherently political.

There is also a subsection of this called a Permablitz. Permablitz is a portmanteau of the words "Permaculture" and "Blitz". Permaculture itself is an approach to land management that works with the local ecosystem and uses complex system theory to build up community, ecological resilience, and sustainability. A Permablitz is a quick, focused application of energy by a community to transform an area within a day to a permaculture system. To start, find or make a group in your community, pick a location, pick a day, reach consensus on who brings what, and wake up early to start the day. Plant trees and saplings, mulch, dig irrigation ditches, build compost bins, chicken huts, and raised beds, do skillshares, teach and be taught, build connections in your community, and so much more

Remember though, the goal is to complete a fully sustainable permaculture garden by the end of the day, so be realistic in your plans based on what materials are available to you and how many volunteers you have. Hopefully by the end of the day you can admire the work you have done.

## How To Destroy Other People's Lawns

It is clear in our current conundrum that individual actions are too little too late to solve our issues, it therefore becomes necessary to do things on a wider scale. You can do these things by yourself, but it is often safer, more effective, and funner to do this with your friends.

**Seed Bombing:** Seed bombing is the launching of capsules of native species and fertilizer into vacant (or not vacant) lots. Its fun for children, adults, when on the go or out in the town. It can be done in a lot of ways, from salt shakers full of seeds that you shake as you pass by to drones sowing seeds into hard to reach places. The most popular and ubiquitous way is the seed bomb. The recipe is simple

- 5 parts clay soil (or powdered clay)
- 1 part compost
- 1 part seeds

Mix with water to bind and let it sit for a day or so, then toss!



## How Lawns are Destroying the Environment

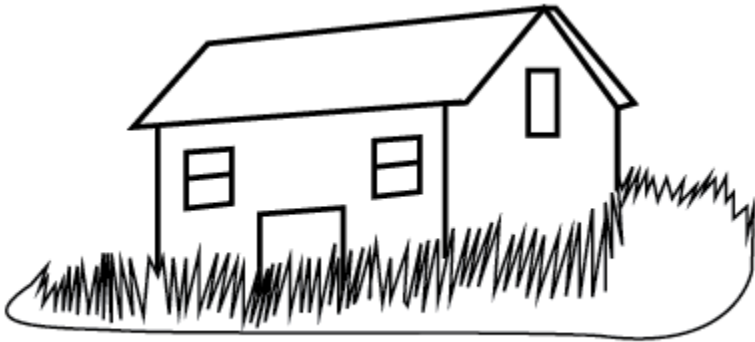
The wide scale adoption of lawns that came with the suburb bloom had immediate ecological consequences. The wide scale adoption of pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides lead to the cratering of bird populations, the weakening of entire ecosystems, and detrimental health effects including cancer. The creation of “safer” pesticides were little more than a marketing scheme. 78 million pounds of pesticides and 90 million pounds of fertilizers are dumped onto lawns in the US every year, shredding vital insect populations.

As water becomes a more and more valuable commodity, the lawn becomes more and more of a waste. Every day, 9 billion gallons of fresh water are poured onto lawns. Much of it becomes runoff, carrying dangerous chemicals into local waterways to turn into destructive algal blooms and poisoning our potable water supply

The climate effect is even worse. The wide scale use of lawns means lawn equipment use accounts for 4% of yearly emissions. In our times where every single percent of emissions we prevent is necessary for our continued survival, eliminating the lawn is a must.

## How to Destroy Your Lawn.

**Stop Mowing It:** The simplest thing you can do to destroy your lawn is to stop mowing it. Let it overgrow. Watch as bug, animal, and plant species thrive in their new home. Create paths with rocks, logs, mulch, so you can traverse it. If you face potential fines, arrest, etc for having an overgrown lawn, this might not be the option for you. It should be noted that rather than being a solution for the damage lawns are doing, this is rather stopping it from getting worse. To start healing this problem, we must create active solutions to stop this.



**Gardening:** One of the tastiest options is to turn your lawn into a garden for crops. There are many ways you can go about this, you could build raised beds, mulch the existing turf and use it in a lasagna garden, or even just till it up and plant in the soil. It should be noted that lawns are often nutritionally barren for crops and you'll need to bring that nutrition in. Compost is a must.

**Planting Native Species:** This requires some research on your part, but is well worth it. Find out about grasses, perennials, wildflowers, trees, and other sorts of vegetation that are native to your region and plant them. Maintain it by weeding out invasive species and watch as your dead lawn becomes a hustling and bustling spot for native insect species, butterflies, birds, reptiles, etc.

This not only creates a beautiful environment that helps heal the wider ecosystem in your area, but also saves you money on water bills and pesticides in the long run.

**Xeriscaping:** For regions dealing with or facing the possibility of droughts, reducing or even eliminating the water consumption of lawns is a must. Xeriscaping is the careful design of a space to reduce how much water a system needs through eliminating potential runoff, evaporation, and using dry resistant or loving plants. There is a common idea that this just means seas of gravel and cactuses, but there is so much more to this as the native plants in deserts and dry regions are as varied as any other ecosystem.

