

The following dialog has been floating around the internet for a couple of years now. Since no citation is given, I don't know who should receive credit for it. If you or someone you know is the author of this dialog, (unless you're St. Francis, God, OR St. Catherine) please contact Lois Robbins at lois@robbinsmail.com and I'll update the *Lawn Wars* Website to give you credit. Please see commentary below.

God and Lawn Care

GOD: Frank, 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, milk weeds, and stuff I started eons ago? I had a 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 colors by now. But, all I see are these green rectangles.

ST. 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? But it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

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

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it – sometimes twice a week.

GOD: They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

ST. FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

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

ST. FRANCIS: No sir, just the opposite: They pay to throw it away.

GOD: Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST. FRANCIS: yes, sir.

GOD: These suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

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

GOD: What nonsense. 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 and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

ST. 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: No!? What would they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

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

GOD: And where do they get this mulch?

ST. FRANCIS: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

GOD Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST. CATHERINE: Dumb and Dumber, Lord. It's a story about . . .

GOD: Never mind. I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

GOD Bless America!

(To put a fine point on it) *Lawn Wars* author's Comments:

Dandelions and violets are not native to the North American Continent. They were probably brought here by early settlers from their home countries, where their growth was kept in check by natural predators and diseases there. Without those natural predators and diseases, they've multiplied so fast that here, they're classified as weeds. Milkweed is, indeed a native to North America, and an essential part of the Monarch butterfly's life-cycle. Without milkweed we would have no monarchs. Many other region-specific native plants have evolved similar symbiotic relationships with beneficial insects, many of which are key pollinators for our food-crops.

Grass is not always bad. Some native prairie grasses play an important role in a native ecosystem. Their long root systems break up hard soil and can find water deep below the earth's surface. They give structure to a native landscape. Typically, these grasses are not used in lawns, though Buffalo Grass, which grows to a height of six inches, is gaining favor as an unmowed lawn-grass in some regions. The grasses found in turfgrass are likely to be Kentucky Bluegrass and Fescues. It's worth noting that hay fever is caused primarily by the bluegrass we grow in our lawns, and ragweed, neither of which are natives, and not by native goldenrod, which usually gets the blame.

Leaves, in addition to providing excellent mulch to hold moisture and protect tree and shrub roots from excess winter cold, can also provide nutrients when composted.