

Chatting with the Good Dr. Laura Shook
April 2009

Spring is here, the breeze is gentle, the air is fresh, lawns are turning green and will soon need to be mowed. What will you mow your lawn with? Gas mowers are certainly effective but noisy and produce more noxious exhaust than automobiles. Electric is a little better but still noisy and the exhaust has simply been transferred to a distant power plant. Of course both gas and electric mowers do have a tendency to chop off fingers or throw rocks at windows and body parts (“#!@&% ... ouch”).
Noise, stink, broken glass and blood, no thank you.

If you would prefer a cleaner, safer, more peaceful lawn mowing experience. Consider the clack-clack-clack of a reel lawn mower. Take advantage of the cool morning air without waking the neighbors. Walk-push-turn, walk-push-turn, you get exercise, the lawn is cut, the air is clean, the forest animals are undisturbed and you still have all your body parts. Oh sure, the blades are sharp, with enough effort (or lack of attention) and a bit of twisted karma you can chop off a finger (but you really do have to try) but your windows will be safe. I have found that the reel mowers one can purchase from the local hardware chains are cheaply made and do not do the job required. Check this website for a well made German mower;
<http://www.cleanairedgarden.com/reelmowers.html>

It has been my experience that reel mowers work best on small and medium sized lawns and lawns that are fairly level. Grooming a larger lawn with a reel mower would, I imagine, be quite the Olympic workout requiring youthful endurance, pacing and quite possibly a visit or two with a chiropractor. If youthful exuberance is in short supply electric might be a practical option. Be sure to purchase carbon offset credits or consider borrowing someone's sheep.

Hey Janet Miller, can we keep livestock in Riverside?

Your lawn only needs 1 inch of water a week so keep an eye on your rain gage or set an empty tuna can outside to gage Mother Natures water contribution. If the gage reads 1 inch or the tuna can is full you do not need to water. If you find yourself tempted to anoint your lawn with chemicals that discourage weeds and boost lawn growth be sure you read any and all labels especially the part that says “Warning” remembering that anything you put on your lawn will make it's way into you, your children, your pets, the water table and the Arkansas river.

Recommended Reading: “The Organic Suburbanite, An Environmentally Friendly Way To Live the American Dream” by Warren Schultz.

For more information on Carbon Offset Services checkout www.treehugger.com and see their Survey of Carbon Offset Services.

On May 2nd (the first Saturday in May) I will be hosting the second annual spring open house in my office from 10 AM till 2 PM. Mark your calendars and come play.

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