

## **In the Garden (by Shelley McPhee Haist)**

A conversation between God and St. Francis on the subject of lawns...

**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, thistles and stuff I started eons ago? I have a perfect no maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any soil type, 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 colours by now. But all I see are these green rectangles.

**St. FRANCIS:** It's the tribes that settled here, 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 colourful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperature. Do these people 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 other plants that crop up in the lawn.

**GOD:** The spring rain 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. Many 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:** 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-e-bob,

**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. Plus, as they rot, the leaves form compost to enhance the soil. It's a natural circle 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 do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter and keep the soil moist and loose?

**St. FRANCIS:** After throwing away the eaves, they go out and buy something called mulch. They haul that home and spread it around in place for 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 hear 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 really stupid movie about

**GOD:** Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from ST. Francis.