

American Savannah

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Our lawns are one of our simplest pleasures. Grass is a luxury that represents relaxation, freedom, time off and of course, time away from the world of tarmac and concrete. In today's world, golf-course style lawns are sacred. But long before lawns, turfs and sod, there was savannah. Perhaps, we're channeling memories of our ancient ancestors on the great African savannahs. However over the course of thousands of years, the man who hunted on the grasses of the savannah has evolved into the man who hunts down dandelions. The pursuit of the perfect lawn is a booming industry, where agribusiness meets home improvement. Central to the notion of the perfect lawn is the notion of control, over weeds, over weather, over nature. Lawns that are up to golf-course standards are still very much a North American status symbol. Somehow, the grass always seems greener in the neighbour's yard.



The lawn is so central to American popular culture that it has become a major component of the American dream. The myriad products and events devised around manicuring and decorating lawns have become iconic. Then there's the quirky, spectacular and often hilarious lawnmower races organized by the United States Lawnmower Racing Association. Says one lawn mower racing enthusiast: "If you don't want to cut the grass, then come on out and go fast!"

No matter how blisteringly hot a climate is, water dependent green carpets are sprouting up. In Nevada for example, there has been some controversy over whether or not grass is something that the region should live without. In fact, the South Nevada Water Authority has even begun encouraging residents to pull up their lawns - they'll pay cash per square foot to see the lawn gone. But they're competing with the sun-belt lifestyle.

American Savannah takes viewers along on a wild and quirky ride into the world of one of America's longest-standing obsessions, the perfect lawn. Unfortunately, "Nature will disappoint those who want perfect lawns. They'll have to use a bunch of toxic products that affect the environment and people's health," according to ecologist Michel Gaudet. "The greater the biodiversity, the more it makes Nature strong...the pursuit of perfection is a syndrome."

American Savannah is directed by Jean-Francois M an and Ian Lagarde.

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