

WANNA PLAY?

MONDAY
\$13 SPA ROOMS

TUESDAY
RADICAL RUBDOWN

WEDNESDAY
\$7 LOCKERS

BLACKOUT
3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

STEAMPORTLAND.COM
IT'S HOT HERE!

The Pampered Gardener

Will Dirty Dan keep his fingernails clean?

I am starting to feel really differently about gardening this year compared to others. I know what I'm about to say is a complete 180 from last month. I went out to my yard, but not much got done. In past years it wouldn't be uncommon for me to have whole beds dug up and planted by now. Neat rows of cool season vegetables, perhaps a bit early, would be planted nonetheless. Maybe a tree, if not for myself, then for a friend. But this year, all I want to do is wander through meadows of fresh grass with a wildflower spotting the landscape.

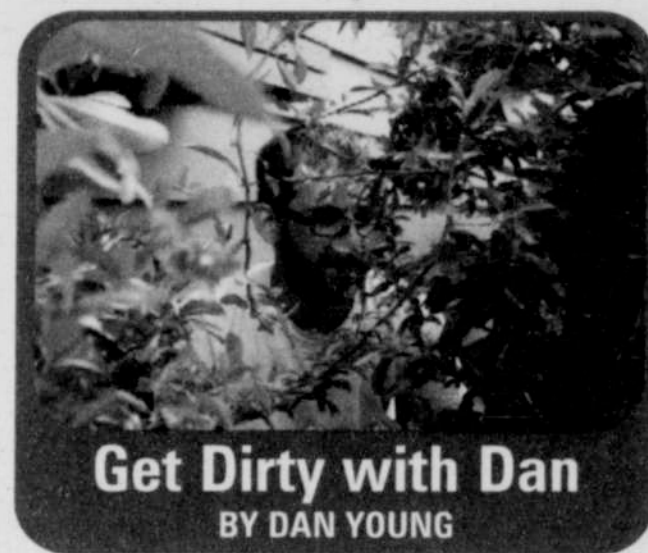
I would rather enjoy what other people have done rather than break a sweat or another shovel handle. I have been toying with the idea of actually abstaining from gardening for the season. Would it be possible for me to play the passive role in the gardening world for an entire spring, not getting my hands dirty at all?

I wonder if maybe it's because I just finally saw the film *Marie Antoinette*, which I really liked. If you haven't seen it, there are lots of amazingly beautiful gardens. (Don't worry, I'm not ruining the plot for you—they cut her head off.) The whole time I was watching it, I kept thinking, "If that young queen can have beautiful country gardens and grounds, why can't this one?"

I guess mostly because I'm not royalty, but I can dream, right? I would love to stroll through my own acres of grassy fields and tightly clipped hedges and drink champagne all day long, while strapping young lads rake leaves and trim my bushes. I'm not sure about all the powdered wigs, but if I had to, I suppose I could give it a shot. Taking a break from the labor of tending to the garden is not too much to ask for just one year, is it? To relax and enjoy a garden without a million weeds popping up or spending hours pruning branches and hauling away debris sounds so good to me right now. And I'm sure the idea would appeal to lots of you, too.

I was talking to a friend who recently bought a new house, and he asked if I had any time-saving gardening tips. He has some large shrubs he would like to take out and new beds he would like to put in. He also, at the moment, has quite a large lawn to take care of. I have taken out my fair share of overgrown shrubbery. One thing I stumbled across a few years back that has saved me time and backaches when it comes to getting the old stumps out is a car jack. Sounds strange, but it works great.

When I take out a stump, I dig all the way



around a shrub until I hit the mass of roots. Then I dig and chop through the roots on one side, making a space large enough to squeeze a board against the root ball and another against the soil on the other side. I place a tire jack between the two boards and crank away. Generally, in a minute or two, a popping sound will foretell the last roots breaking free, and the stump will roll right out of the ground.

Something I also do every year is mulch all my garden beds with 3 to 4 inches of compost. This does two things that will save you some time. First, it helps control any weed seeds from germinating that might have blown in over the winter, turning weeding into a stroll of plucking here and there, rather than an all-day ordeal. The second is that it cuts down dramatically on the amount of watering you will have to do. That blanket of compost slows down water evaporation from your soil. You might find that, after mulching, plants that you had to water every other day in past summers will go a week or longer without a drink.

I also recommended that my friend buy a mulching lawnmower. I bought one after years of using an old school push mower. It didn't take me long to find out that not only was I not raking anymore, but I could run that mower over piles of leaves and small garden debris and the cleanup was all done. Suddenly, mowing my lawn was fun again.

Realistically, I'm most likely not going to spend my spring with clean fingernails, but I will surely do a few things that ensure I can spend at least one weekend a month as a lady of leisure. Bring on the champagne! 10

To reach DIRTY DAN, who will answer any and all of your gardening questions, simply e-mail dirtydthegardener@yahoo.com.



For a gardening shortcut, mulch your flower beds.

Memory Mattress
Queen mattress
\$740⁰⁰
Free Delivery. Ask for details.

Cotton Cloud Futons brings you a brand new line of Viscoelastic memory foam mattresses.... The same body-molding/pressure-relieving foam that you see on TV, but at a much better price!

Cotton Cloud
Futons and Furniture

Your alternative sleep source

701 NE Broadway • Near Lloyd Center • 503-335-0758
Mon-Sat: 10am-7:30pm • Sun: 12-5pm • www.cottoncloudfutons.com