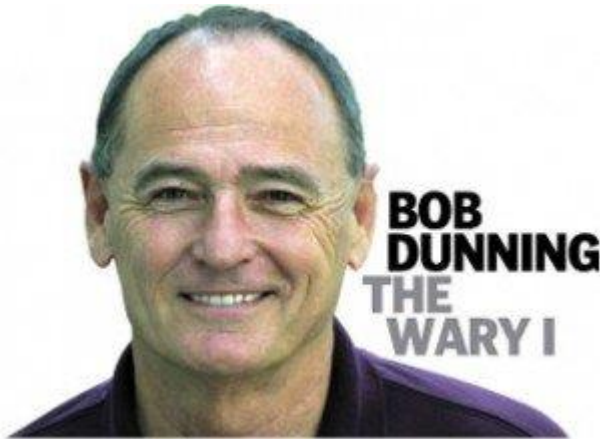


# Bob Dunning: It's us vs. 'them' in the battle of the lawns

By **Bob Dunning**

In this city famous for mandating a mistletoe-laden street tree in every front yard under penalty of death, it should be expected that all those trees eventually will drop several tons of leaves on our lawns and streets.



I realize the city seems to think leaves drop only in the fall, but I have a messy hackberry that proves otherwise.

In addition to leaves, many trees drop a whole bunch of other stuff at various times of the year. I mean, hackberries drop hackberries, mulberries drop mulberries, pines drop cones, and sycamores shed bark and exploding puff balls and squirrel fur all year long.

You can, of course, leave all this tree debris sitting on the lawn and risk having it pile up so high that you can't make it through the front door.

Or you can wait for a strong north wind to blow it all to Dixon and make it their problem, not yours.

Then again, how about emptying a gallon can of your favorite unleaded fuel on top of the mess, strike a match and hope it all goes up in flames?

Oddly, even though the city requires us to have a front-yard tree, it provides absolutely no assistance in watering it, fertilizing it, ridding it of vermin or cleaning up after it. That's our job as responsible citizens.

Well one day, in response to what nature has wrought, mankind used its God-given ingenuity and brilliantly invented the leaf blower. I'm sure, in fact, it was a long-suffering Davis resident who invented the leaf blower. After all, necessity is the mother of invention.

But, rather than welcome this modern exhaust-spewing miracle, some Davis residents quickly realized this was just one more thing they could complain about.

And complain they do.

Wrote one, using the public forum provided by this very newspaper, "I would like to say something about the ubiquitous mow 'n' blowers, otherwise known as yard maintenance services. I live in a rental house that includes such a service. They come once a week and spend about 10 minutes here, mowing about 1/16th inch off the blades of grass, but mostly running leaf blowers around and about."

Let me guess, most of the guys operating these leaf blowers couldn't dream of living in Davis, and they spend only 10 minutes on your yard because their wages are so low that they have to complete numerous jobs in a single day to make ends meet.

And some of them probably don't speak English, which explains why when you scream "Turn that damn thing off," they just smile and wave at you.

"It is really annoying," the complaint goes on. "Leaf blowers are very loud and startling at 7 a.m. when they usually arrive. Why are we still subjected to this craziness?"

Let me get this straight. There are 10,080 minutes in a week and you can't give these guys 10 minutes to clean up your yard as they scrape out a living while you drink your morning coffee all snug in your bed?

Another letter writer claims she is under a "weekly siege" from leaf blowers. Ah, but she has a solution to stop this minimum-wage madness.

“More than 20 cities in California have banned gas-powered leaf blowers. I propose that Davis join these cities. Our neighborhoods would be quieter and cleaner, and the exercise benefits of using rakes and brooms instead might even improve our health.”

Rakes and brooms are a fine idea except for the fact they would at least quadruple the amount of time it would take for our hard-working servants to complete the task at hand, probably putting most of them out of a job.

Suggestion: buy some earplugs, read up on “tolerance” and “diversity,” and smile and wave back when these machine-toting maniacs dare to clean your yard.

If that doesn't work, there are 20 cities in California that will welcome you with open arms.

— *Reach Bob Dunning at [bdunning@davisenterprise.net](mailto:bdunning@davisenterprise.net). Read Dunning online on Tuesdays and Thursdays at [www.davisenterprise.com](http://www.davisenterprise.com), under “Web update.”*