

The Meter Setter

6

June 2020

Keeping Water Running



It's easy to take for granted how effortlessly we access water and the role clean water plays in public health. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the importance of essential professionals, including those who work to provide clean water every day. While basic grocery items may be lacking, water professionals strive to make sure everyone has access to water. This basic and most vital resource is even more important as the World Health Organization (WHO) encourages frequent handwashing to combat spread of the virus. The medical field depends on water and waste treatment to treat patients and manufacture supplies.

The pandemic has reminded us how important our water and sewer utilities are. Many utilities are operating through the pandemic with reduced staff and balanced shifts, yet still provide the same level of service. They report that the shortage of toilet paper has led some people to use non-flushable items, including so-called flushable wipes. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of only flushing appropriate products as short-staffed utilities fight exceptionally difficult blockages.

Ford Meter Box is proud to be part of the water industry and appreciates those who work to provide such an essential resource. In 1953, Ford Meter Box published a poem titled *Making RUNNING WATER* Run by John L. Ford, Sr. This excerpt is our salute to water and sewer professionals everywhere!



*Men work on earth at many things:
Some till the soil, a few are kings;
But the noblest job beneath the sun
Is making RUNNING WATER run!
-John L. Ford, Sr.*











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One Good Dog
Oil on masonite panel by Rebecca Burton

JULY 2020

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The American Lawn



It's summertime, and the living is easy. Easy, that is, unless you are one who strives to have the perfect lawn.

The struggle to maintain a yard that is a showpiece is often an obsession with Americans who spend billions of dollars each year on lawn care and expend untold millions of hours of labor to achieve lawns of distinction.

The cultivation of low-cut turf grasses began in Europe where aristocrats fancied such lawns. In the late 1700s, the practice spread to America where George Washington had a large lawn at Mount Vernon, and where Thomas Jefferson had a grassy area at Monticello.

At first, residential lawns were cut at considerable expense to the owner by men and women swinging scythes. The invention of the mechanical lawnmower in the 1830s enabled people of ordinary means to cultivate lawns.

Lawn culture received a boost when people began to move from cities to newly developed suburbs. Newspapers and magazines began to devote space to articles on lawn care, and a fledgling lawn-care industry took root in the eastern part of America.

Residential lawns received an important endorsement from Frederick Law Olmsted, the noted landscape artist who designed Riverside, Illinois, a Chicago suburb where each house had a lawn.

Years later, when Abraham Levitt and his sons built Levittown, New York, in the early 1950s, each home featured an established lawn as part of the purchase package.

Levitt wrote, "No single feature of a suburban residential community contributes as much to the charm and beauty of the individual home and the locality as well-kept lawns.

The popularity and importance of lawns in America is not to be denied. Not only do lawns surround our residences, but we have created vast expanses of grassy areas around government buildings, college campuses, office structures, and open spaces such as golf courses and parks. A recent survey by satellite shows cultivated lawns cover slightly more than 79,000 square miles of American land. For comparison, that's an area about the size of Minnesota.

There are some truly outstanding lawns in America. New York City's Central Park boasts of two of this country's most famous lawns. One is Sheep Meadow, where sheep actually roamed until about 1930. The other is The Great Lawn, a favorite spot for New Yorkers on a sunny afternoon.

The lawn at Oak Alley Plantation is one of the most photographed lawns in America. The lawn at Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Lenox, Massachusetts, is filled with creative picnic arrangements spread by concertgoers on summer nights.

The South Lawn of the White House, the lawn at The Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina, and the lawn at Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island are other famous expanses of grass.

To some, the future of the American lawn is in jeopardy. Some say that lawn maintenance is wasteful of time and money and that the use of chemicals and fertilizers harms the environment. They advocate a return to the "natural yard," one that features native plants and requires minimal upkeep.

Lawns have their critics, and they ultimately may fade from the scene, but there's nothing quite like the smell of freshly cut grass or the sight of fireflies rising from areas of dark green sod on a summer evening.

by Pete Jones

Please send questions or comments to Pete Jones at peteinwabash@comcast.net.