

LAWN (RE) DISTURBANCE LABORATORY

UNEARTHING TO REWILD, REMEMBER, LOOK FORWARD

TURF REMOVAL WORKSHEET



TURF OBSERVATION: PAGE 1

What kind of lawn are we dealing with?



1. Is the grass thick or thin, or a mixture? (circle a spot on the scale)

THIN! ← Like the width of a toothpick ————— MEDIUM ————— Thick! → Like the width of a pencil...

2. How tall is the grass? (circle a spot on the scale)

SHORT! ← barely comes up to my knuckle ————— MEDIUM ————— TALL! → brushes my ankles

3. How monoculture is the grass? (circle a spot on the scale)

NOT VERY (AT LEAST 50% NOT GRASS!) ← MIXTURE ————— SUPER! (ALL GRASS & NOTHING ELSE!)

4. Why is this lawn here?

Who benefits from it? Who might miss it if it was gone?
What else could be here? What used to be here?
What might be here in the future?

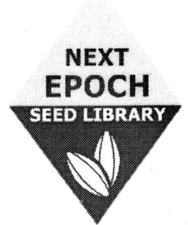


BEFORE DIGGING: Lawn disturbance acknowledgement

This lawn, like all lawns, is co-created by grass and people. Certain grasses have learned to live with certain groups of humans in the guise of lawn: grasses that are good at being stepped on, bunched together, trimmed, fertilized (or not...), and can still stay green(ish) are cared for & cultivated by humans on a massive scale. These grasses form a simplified landscape shaped to the needs of humans and grass more than other organisms or the soil. But they are still alive. We will disturb a living system today. Let's acknowledge that life and the forces that brought it into being before we dig it up.

more info: ellieirons.com/projects/soil-seed-bank

LAWN (RE)DISTURBANCE LABORATORY

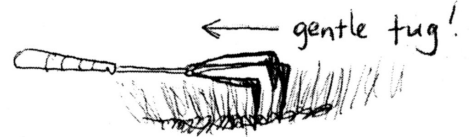


UNEARTHING TO REWILD, REMEMBER, LOOK FORWARD

TURF REMOVAL WORKSHEET: PAGE 2

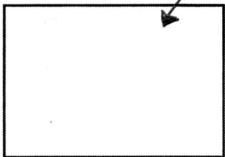
TURF DISTURBANCE:

1. Take your hand rake and sink it into the turf along one edge of the plot. Give a gentle tug. Feel the turf pull back. Pull a little harder. Listen for the sound of grasping, tearing roots. Feel the popping and shifting as the tufts of grass dislodge and break free. Wiggle and tug until you can peel away the first chunk of turf.

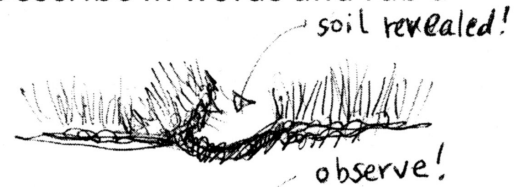


2. The soil is revealed! Take a moment to observe what you've unearthed. What color is the soil? How would you describe its texture? Describe in words and rub a little here:

RUB SOIL HERE!



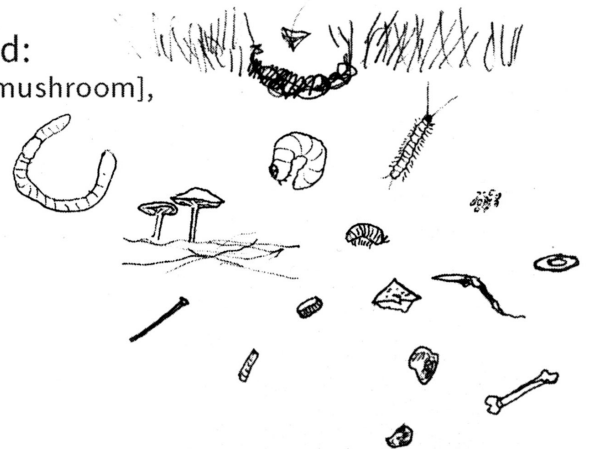
NOTES:



3. As you continue to remove more turf, do you find:

- *Anything living in the soil? (mycelium [thready white soil mushroom], grubs, centipedes, pill bugs, other insects or insect eggs? Or seeds? Or tree roots?)
- *Any human made artifacts? (bricks, construction rubble, plastic, metal, glass?)
- *Any other organic objects? Rocks or pebbles, wood, shells or bones?

NOTES: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE SOIL?



4. Mix and fluff! Mix in some potting soil (half a large bag) to replace the ~50 lbs of turf we removed. Stir & fluff to give the seeds a good start!

5. Compost or bury the removed turf, or chop it up to use as mulch*

6. Wait to see what sleeping seeds awaken in the disturbed plot!



*Remember lawns are treated in many ways! Some may have herbicides applied to them, or soil that has heavy metals or other contaminants. Consider this before using for growing edible plants!