

Grasses for “Asses”.

Elk Meadow now patched black because of a recent controlled burn by the Forest Service will soon rejuvenate itself and be sprouting new succulent grasses soft and springy to the touch. Important as it is to the aesthetic look of the meadow, the new soft grass is a consideration for those who elect to not litter the ground.

Nature calling means many things but historically this event was always taken care of by natural means. Mullein or its common name, skunk cabbage is one of the first plants to appear when the ground is disturbed. It has many medicinal qualities; its good for clogged up lungs; it helps to relax you so you can sleep easily, but besides using it in a medicinal tea, its soft, large leaves were commonly known to the early settlers as Indians toilet paper. So now you know.

Being discreet is a common problem hiking or skiing when nature calls. And spring snows and grass emerging can encourage situations when avoidance of people is difficult. A story was circulated among the old broads skiing crowd about one of their members whose husband feigned anonymity when the slick wet yellow snow on the grass caused her to ski out of the forest unto the crowded slope, pants hanging.

Of course there are times when any type of vegetation will do. Case in point was an Olympic hopeful who was way out in front of the pack in a 10 K race through town. Unfortunately the excitement caused her body to revolt and she tiptoed through the tulips in front of the bank hoping the bright blooms would cover her bright buns. Everyone waved as they went by her.

As a youngster growing up in northern Wisconsin, it always amazed me how the farmers would carefully save the cobs from the corn and then they would appear in a ribboned basket with the Sears and Roebuck catalogs beside the two-seater out back.

Over the years, hiking and working with trees, I have noticed many differences among the qualities of usable grasses. Of course, the Indian TP, the Mullein plant is the best, but sage with its pungent odor and firm branches does the job without scratching, unlike the pine needles of the fir and ponderosa. And don't even think about using a spruce.

I have decided now that I am older and do not want to rely on what's available in the bush; I thought I might grow my own grass. Since I don't want to jump into things lightly, I have been researching this problem. Lo and behold here in downtown Evergreen, Jeanne in the garden department at the Hardware has a wide variety of grasses which when mature will accommodate even the most hardened. So in closing, I'm sure each of you nature lovers out there has something to contribute to this delicate subject, I only want to say: “He who swings low in the grass must know its April—Fool”.

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