

# **DOWN HOME: Season of hope, grass & pin oaks**

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The next couple of weeks should tell the tale: Will my yard look more like an oasis or a desert?

You should be grateful the first man was named “Adam” and not “Marv.” Otherwise, in addition to Original Sin, all of humanity would have been stricken with Original Brown Thumb.

Many times, as I’ve sweated in the various yards surrounding the various homes where my family has lived, I’ve thought about Adam’s curse. He would make his living by the sweat of his brow, and he would struggle to make things grow. I’ve got the sweating part down, and as far as making things grow, well that’s a struggle.



Take my Pampas grass, please. I love the look of the stuff in my backyard flower beds. Some of them grow up to six feet high, and they’ve got these lovely filigreed “blooms” or whatever you call them, that seem to float in the summer breeze. And I can’t seem to keep them growing for more than a couple of years, no matter how I water or fertilize or weed around them. One of the newest ones—let’s call him “Runt”—seems to be withering in only his second spring.

Last winter, the combination of drought and a hard December freeze took a toll on other blooming shrubs in our yard. So, a few weeks ago, I decided to trim out all the dead branches and give a new lease on life to these sometimes-lovely plants. Now, it looks like we've got Charlie Brown Christmas trees beneath my wax myrtles.

Also, during the winter, I pruned the pin oak tree whose impenetrable shade had been killing the bermuda grass in my front yard. Lately, it's been looking puny, and I'm wondering if it's going to take its revenge by up and dying.

Meanwhile the grass appears to be in shock, unaccustomed, as it is, to sunlight. It's thinner than it's been in 10 years—sorta reminds me of the top of my head—even though I water it diligently and treat it to nutrients. If I thought it would do any good, I'd wave a new Pampas grass plant over it, saying, "See, you can grow up to be thick and tall (at least before I make you sick and you die)."

Fortunately, this is spring, and spring is a season of hope. It's the time when plants begin growing again and both the Astros and Rangers have a chance (mathematically, at least) of playing in the World Series. Not coincidentally, we celebrate Easter during spring.

This past Sunday, we rejoiced in an empty grave. On a Friday, Jesus took upon himself the sins of the world—your sins and mine. He succumbed to their crushing weight, died and was buried. But on Easter Sunday, he defeated death caused by sin, stepped out of that tomb, and offered every person permanent hope. We, who deserved his death, which we would not have escaped, now may accept his gift of life and anticipate spending eternity with him. Wherever that is, it will be heaven.

And even though my miserable attempts at gardening remind me that, like Adam, I have fallen, I can live in hope.

—*Marv Knox*

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