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Tapis Vert

Green Carpets for Labyrinths, Mazes, and Checkerboards

If you're inspired by the intricate creations of crop artists who create "crop circles" or even intricate portraits in large fields of grain but just don't have access to the space, consider using a lawn as your "crop." By employing math and mowing, you can create labyrinths, mazes, checkerboards, or abstract patterns turning a lawn into a tapis vert or green carpet.

Objectives

- Combine creativity with math to design a green patterned carpet reminiscent of crop art.
- Utilize a push lawn mower to create patterns in an average lawn.

Materials

- Lawn
- Lawn mower
- Graph paper and pencil

Time Required

Anywhere from an hour to many hours, depending on the complexity of your design.

Directions

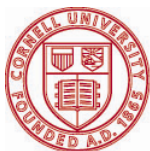
Lawns haven't always been as they are today, and the tradition of "lawn" varies greatly among countries; in the United States they are a common part of the home landscape. We first hear of lawns in the 1200's but then they were most likely managed fields into which ornamental trees and shrubs were planted. It was in France in the 1600's that grass was highly maintained to form what we now consider to be lawn. The French called these tapis vert or green carpets. Since then, the term tapis vert has been used to describe lawns where grass is mown at different heights to create patterns.



1. Determine the lawn area you will be using. Knowing your site before you design can help when it comes to the size and type of pattern you choose. Measure the dimensions of the lawn or the part of the lawn available for use.



2. Grab some paper and pencil and get creative.
 - A checkerboard pattern is created using equal squares. Think of the mown squares as the red squares and the un-mown squares as the black squares.
 - Labyrinths come in many shapes and sizes: square or round; three, five, seven, or even thirteen circuits. Grasping the math behind labyrinths is fairly easy once you know the shape and number of circuits you'd like. Unlike mazes, labyrinths have one entrance, which is the same as the exit, and there are no dead ends.
 - A maze is trickier to design than a labyrinth. It has a distinct entrance and a distinct exit. It also features dead ends.
3. Do the math. What makes green carpet patterns stand out is their symmetry. Transpose your design onto a piece of graph paper and note the scale. For example, one square = three feet. Be sure to denote which areas are mown and which are left to grow.
4. Layout your design before mowing. There are many ways to do this:
 - Athletic field paint
 - Stakes with string
 - For very small areas, baking flour can be sprinkled onto the grass to mark the design (non-toxic and inexpensive too!)
5. Mow. Depending on the time of year and how fast your grass is growing you may have to mow once or even twice a week to maintain the desired look.



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