

# Welcome to the jungle



Woe be he who enters  
the dense mass...

Okay, okay, I'll get to it already.

I've mentioned in the past my (normally) attractive landscaping out front of the house. It's filled with surprisingly healthy and unfortunately fast-growing plants and trees. It's a source of great pride and equally great grief.

The last time I ventured into this forest was prior to my Washington trip, way back in October. Between road trips, holidays, weather and my natural procrastination, it has grown to engulf much of my front area, straining to reach between the boards of my neighbor's fence and attempting to leave it's rock-enclosed domain.



Think you're man enough?

Better get a bigger pair of cutters!

The husband of my best friend set this up for me about 15 years ago. Since then, some plants have taken over and some plants have gone to that great garden in the sky. What's left is a challenging conglomeration of plants and positions that create major havoc for me to actually cut back.

There's adventure! There's danger! There's nature's revenge! All this from a little 6 foot by 6 foot plot? You bet your sweet grass there is!

For example, the monstrous (but pretty) bromilliads have these huge sweeping leaves with sharp, pointy teeth (use John Cleese as Tim the Enchanter voice here). They cut through shirt, jeans and flesh. The colorful, leafy tree whose name I forget is beloved by hornets, who like to build nests under the wide leaves. The fast growing, winding, non-flowering plants stretch across the rocks and attempt to cover my pond from view (not to mention clog my pump). All of this is wrapped in a cocoon of rocks which make ankle turns or trips a constant threat.

Sigh.

I'll have to buck up my courage and get off my butt and finally get this done. This is "The Great Recission". Hornet tree? Gone. Bromilliads? Population control. Pond-obscuring, neighbor-visiting plants? Mass snipping time.

I'll be out there in my work jeans, long sleeve shirt, hat, gloves and nose mask (you can't imagine the pollen, dust and who knows what that's kicked up out there) cutting, hacking and cleaning. I'll also shut off the pond and do a full clean on that (ugh). Then comes the merciless and sweaty work bagging all this up so the garbage men will take it.

Of course, if I did this regularly, it would take me an hour

or two. Instead, it will probably take me an entire morning. The one good thing I can say is once I start this process, I don't stop until everything is done, including sweeping up the walkway and driveway afterwards.

Then I vow never to allow it to get that bad again. Just like every other time during the last 15 years. And then I wait and delay and hem and haw until it's a jungle once again.