

Gardening With Goats

Gemma Alexander September 11, 2018



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Hiring garden goats was a huge trend a couple years ago — you could even book the service on Amazon for a while. But the buzz died down, and it seemed like goat rentals were just another passing trend. Then in early August, Twitter exploded with the story of a Boise neighborhood that was invaded by a herd of 100 goats. It turns out that, yeah, gardening with goats is still a thing.

Community and Environmental Service

Goats rarely escape past the temporary, often electrified fencing around the areas they are hired to clear. Using goats can cost half as much as human laborers, in part because they work best in steep slopes and confined spaces. These are often public spaces that are dangerous or inaccessible to human workers and machines. Because of their inaccessibility, such areas are often used for illegal activity. Unlike humans, who must use their hands to pick up weeds, goats are easily able to avoid drug needles discarded in overgrown areas. And clearing brush in these areas can help deter crime.

But the real benefits are environmental. Goats excel at removing the kind of dry, brushy vegetation that fuels wildfires. Goats eliminate the need for both polluting gas-powered machinery and toxic pesticides. They also fertilize the soil with their manure as they work.



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A Baaad Situation

The goats in Boise were rented to clear vegetation in a highway district water retention pond when they broke through the fence and took over a neighboring landscape. Fortunately, the homeowners were more amused than