Sod removal experience not pleasant



Kathryn Reed attempts to cut the sod at her house in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

Publisher's note: ***This is one in a random series of stories about what it's like to go through the South Tahoe Public Utility District turf buyback program.***

By Kathryn Reed

It took three tiny shovel indentations into the yard to be convinced this was not the route to remove dead grass. I needed a sod cutter.

Before this summer I didn't know what a sod cutter was let alone that they exist. I'll be fine if I never cross paths with one again. For anyone who has operated a rototiller or aerator, it's along those lines. The difference is the job isn't done once the sod is cut.

The sod has to be removed. It rolls up. But the rolls were too dang heavy for me to move so I got the shovel out and chopped them into sections. Each segment was about as big as a baseball base.

I managed to cut 3½ lines last Saturday. Then a part fell off. Ahern's sent a guy up from Gardnerville to fix it. But by this time several hours had passed and I needed to move on to other things. Saturday was supposed to be my day for yard work. After all, the massage was scheduled for the next day in anticipation of not knowing if I'd be able to lift my arms. Dead grass and dirt are not light.



Note: *If renting from Ahern's, do so late afternoon on a Friday to get the equipment for two days for the price of one. This is because the store isn't open on the weekend. And when calling other places, be wary of them saying they have the device because they may not.*

While waiting for the repairman to arrive, I took out the sod and put it in the area where the garbage company picks up trash. I was wishing I had borrowed my friend's Fit-Bit so I'd know how many steps this entailed.

Suffice it to say it was not a good day; it was not a productive day. I was hot, sweaty and barely made a dent into the project. Suddenly, 804-square-feet felt like it might as

well have been AT&T ballpark. I was striking out.

I already had about the most ugly front yard on the street. I didn’t realize splotchy lines of dirt could make it look even worse.

Stakes mark where the sprinklers are. Spray paint outlined where I wanted the path.

I had tried sketching what I wanted. That didn’t go so well either. I can’t even draw stick figures so there was no way this part was going to resemble something comprehensible. I’ll need to try again because of the requirements with the South Tahoe Public Utility District turf buyback program is to provide a drawing.

The best part of this endeavor was meeting Brian Hirdman on Friday afternoon at the rental place. (We’d actually met before for a story but at the time I couldn’t recall how I knew him.) He was there renting a sod cutter, too. He asked what I was doing, and said he did sod removal and landscaping for a living. I gave him my card and said if he was serious about helping, to call.

He called ….