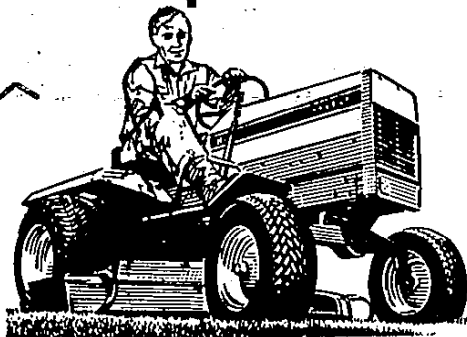


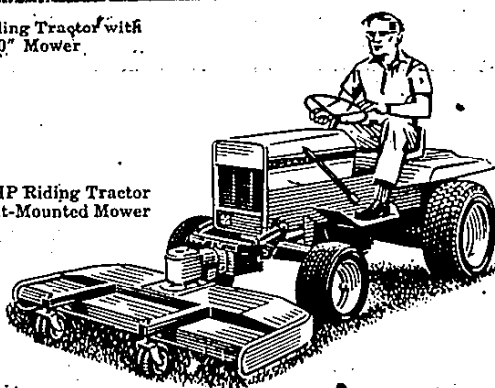
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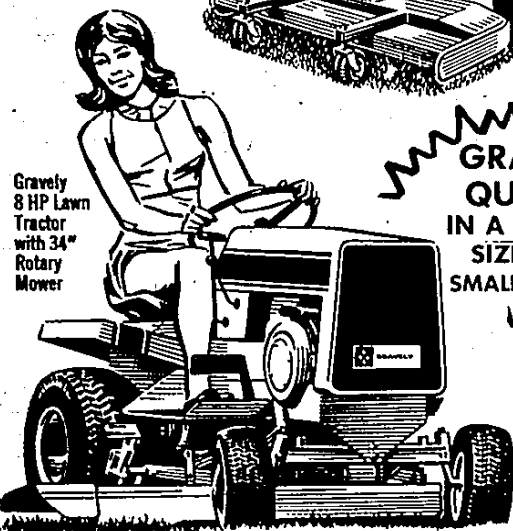
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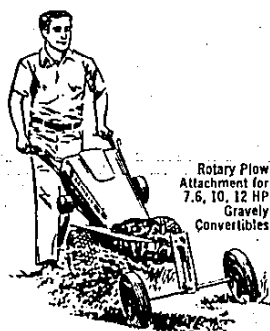


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Terrariums

(Continued from Page 18)

Popular tropical plant selections include: Begonias, freckle-face, philodendren, African violets, baby's tear, peperomia, and telanthera (Joseph's coat of many colors).

Tropical plants generally need more water and light than the woodland varieties.

Woodland plant suggestions are: ivy, club mosses, lichens, violets, liverleaf, ferns and wild strawberry.

Figurines, bits of bark and moss, colored rocks and fake mushrooms are colorful terrarium additions.

Building the "bottle garden" is easy, keeping a few basic points in mind.

Start by placing a drainage layer about one to four inches deep at the bottom of the glass container. Good drainage material can be charcoal bits, sand and pieces of crushed pottery. A drainage layer prevents the terrarium's soil from becoming waterlogged.

It acts like a small reservoir at the bottom of the glass.

Some terrarium containers come with drainage spouts but with most of the homemade varieties, some provision must be made to collect the excess water.

The next consideration is plant design. If the entire garden is going to be seen it's best to place the taller plants in the middle surrounded by the smaller ones.

If the garden is only going to be viewed from one angle taller plants will look better in back with the smaller ones up front.

Never place the plants directly against the side of the glass container because they will need room to grow.

Another important point to keep in mind is the soil mixture in the terrarium.

Avoid a soil that is too fertile because plants may grow too rapidly and will quickly outgrow their glass container.

A good soil mix might include one part dirt, one part sand, and one part peat moss.

This offers a well-drained, well-balanced, but not too fertile soil. Another soil base is vermiculite.

Watering a terrarium or any plant often can be hazardous.

Too much or too little can kill the plant. It's best to water plants only when they need it and avoid a "watering schedule".

Schedules tend to water-log many plants. Terrariums with covers should not be watered as often as those without covers.

A covered terrarium is a small scale example of the earth's rain cycle. Heat flows through the glass, moisture evaporates and water the plants.

Terrariums need water when the soil is dry, light and slightly cracked. When watering, it's best to use either rain or distilled water.

Ordinary tap water contains chemicals and minerals that will collect on the plants and soil inside the terrarium.

Some general tips for terrarium care include: enough sunlight but not direct sunlight. Direct sunlight coming through glass is like an oven and will literally cook the plants.

Placing the terrarium near a north window will provide a sufficient amount of light. Woodland terrariums require even less light than the tropical variety.

Cacti terrariums will need direct sunlight and less water than either the tropical or woodland gardens. Cacti also need a sandier soil base in order to thrive.

Plant lovers should remember that terrariums or "glass gardens" are a great way to bring nature indoors but they are only temporary and won't last forever. Plants will eventually outgrow the glass container and then it is time to transplant and start again with smaller plants.