

Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



(C1)

Monday, June 19, 1989 O&E



organizing Dorothy Lehmkuhl

Q: My wife spends so much time doing everything perfectly that she's exhausted all the time. How can I convince her to slow down a little?

A: Perfectionism covers a broad spectrum of habits. At one extreme are perfectionists who are flawlessly neat and well-organized. Every hair is in place, their children are immaculate, desks are clear, cars impeccable — as are their garages, filing folders and fingernails. Even their pets always smell nice.

At the opposite end of this spectrum are the perfectionists who live amid chaos. Their work is piled high — in their offices, laundry and basements. Their personal appearance may be disheveled and their tax papers are still laying out. It's almost incomprehensible how people so different have perfectionism in common, but they do.

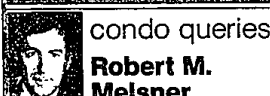
What polarizes these groups is their fear of failure. The Perfect Perfectionists are confident about how to approach their work. They are unafraid of hard work and have learned to do things well. They may be exhausted half the time, but all their work is always caught up. (They cannot rest until it is.) One woman proudly proclaimed that she had all the suggested tools to set up a reminder system and that she was prepared to get started — just as soon as she bought a calligraphy pen to write notes to herself.

The procrastinators believe "if you can't do it well, then don't do it at all" — so they don't. Believing they are incapable of doing things well enough — or overestimating the time or effort to do it — they procrastinate, telling themselves they will do it "later." Their tax papers aren't put away yet because they are waiting until they have time to do it "right." During class discussion I have seen many people almost in tears as they deal with these mental blocks that immobilize them.

The saddest part of perfectionism is that some Perfect Perfectionists still carry a burden of guilt and failure — believing they are not doing things well enough and that they "should" do better. In other words, they live with unrealistic ideals for themselves and consequently never realize an inner sense of peace.

Like all perfectionists, your wife needs to lower her standards a bit, to forgive herself for doing some things half well, and to learn to relax in the process.

Note: Thanks to you and your husband for already supporting my Less Is Better Campaign. Others can send cards or letters to P.O. Box 339, Franklin, 48025.



condo queries Robert M. Melsner

Q: We are a family looking for an apartment. A landlord has told us that a particular section of the complex in which we are interested is located near a playground where children play and the landlord and manager has informed us that this section close to the playground, may be more comfortable for us. Is this legal?

A: The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 provides that it is unlawful to discriminate in the rental of any dwelling by exaggerating drawbacks or failing to inform any person of desirable features of a dwelling or of a community, neighborhood or development because of a person's familial status.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against a prospective resident that he or she would not be comfortable or compatible with the existing residents community, neighborhood or development because of the person's familial status. The conduct of steering a prospective resident with children away from a particular section of a complex and toward another section because of a person's familial status would be a violation of the act.

Although it may seem innocent on the surface, the regulations indicate that this practice is discriminatory, although it has been commonly followed by many landlords in the state and has, in effect, been encouraged by a Michigan Supreme Court ruling several years ago which may now be deemed and superseded by the new act.

Q: Our landlord has a "no pets" policy, but can a landlord restrict a blind resident from keeping a seeing eye dog in his unit?

A: Under the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, the act provides that it is unlawful to refuse to make reasonable accommodations, rules, policies, practices or services when such accommodations may be necessary to afford a handicapped person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a unit, including the public and common use areas.

It is expressly stated in the regulations, that it is a violation of the act for the owner or manager of an apartment complex to refuse to permit a blind applicant to live in the apartment with a seeing eye dog. The rationale used in the regulations is that a blind person will not have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling if a seeing eye dog is not allowed in the unit. Presumably, this would also apply to condominium and cooperatives.

Mow 'em down Rain is prompting new rules for lawn cutting

weeder's guide

Earl Aronson

AP — The drought of recent years appears to be abating in some parts of the country. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, parts of the Southeast, Northeast, West and North have experienced above-average spring soil moisture, and rainfall has been average in other areas.

This means that lawns will be green and lush this summer, so here are some mowing tips from Dr. James Watson, chief agronomist for Toro, maker of outdoor power and irrigation equipment.

1. Set the mower a notch lower than normal cutting height for the early cutting. This removes winter-scorched grass foliage and excess dormant vegetation and permits light and heat to speed grass growth. (Probably, most of you have already made the first lawn passes of the season.)

2. After the first mowings, raise the mower to the preferred cutting height for your region. Kentucky bluegrass, fine-leaved fescues and perennial ryegrasses should not be lower than 1 to 1 1/4 inches. During hot weather or reduced precipitation, raise mowing heights to 2-3 inches.

3. Remove no more than one-third of the leaf surface at any one cutting. Cutting more reduces the lawn's ability to photosynthesize, that is, manufacture food for growth. Grass grows from its base, not from its tip. Mowing does not harm the plant, as long as no more than one-third is removed.

4. Maintain a consistent mowing schedule. Allowing grass to grow too high can cause clipping accumulation. A layer of clippings can smother the grass and create an environment favorable to disease organisms and insects. If the grass gets too long, you may want to mow twice.

First mow at a higher cut, let the clippings dry for a few hours, then mow at the normal height for your region. This will disperse the clippings, and on thin turf they will serve as a mulch, which conserves moisture.

5. How do you deal with lawn clippings? You can use a bagging mower, with either a rear bagger or side-discharge attachment. Rear baggers allow close, easy trimming with either side of the mower, and they bag more efficiently than do side-discharge mowers.

Consider mulching as an alternative to bagging. Mulching mowers cut grass clippings to a fine mulch and disperse them into the lawn, providing it with additional nutrients.

The drawback of mulching is that you will have to mow more often. Expect to mow more than once a week in late spring. Also, using a mulching mower to cut tall, lush grass tends to leave unsightly clippings in your lawn. One way around the mulching problem is to use a rear-bagging mower that easily converts from bagging to mulching.

6. Choose a good time of day to mow. Avoid mowing during early morning, when heavy dew is on the grass. Dry grass is easier to cut, appears better groomed and requires less mowing time. If you must mow when the dew remains, you can partially dissipate it by dragging a garden hose or rope over the turf surface.

7. For the best cut, make sure the mower blades are sharp. Dull blades or improperly adjusted cutting heights can damage turf.

8. For aesthetic purposes, alter cutting patterns with each mowing.

9. Wear proper clothing while mowing. For safety, wear long pants that will protect your skin; avoid loose clothing or dangling jewelry that can snag on mower controls. Wear sturdy, non-slip shoes that provide good traction and protection.

10. Properly maintain your mower. To save yourself from the headache of a mower that won't run when you want it to, use fresh gasoline and thoroughly clean the underside of the deck and external engine components after each mowing. Periodically, clean the air filter, service the spark plug, change the oil and lubricate all mower parts.

(Earl Aronson is the Associated Press garden writer. For a copy of his "AP Guide to House Plants," send \$1.50 to: House Plants, AP Newsfeature, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020. Gardening questions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)

WHAT'S NEW ON THE MARKET

THE PRODUCT — A solar-powered outdoor light.

Manufacturer's claim — That this light can be installed anywhere without wiring... that it is designed for installation around patios and walkways... that it features a crystal-like prismatic polymer lens and custom reflector system... that it produces a higher level of light output than comparable models... that it uses a flashlight-type bulb and two standard "C" batteries that are recharged through the use of a solar panel... that a photocell automatically turns on the light at night for up to 7 1/2 hours... and that it can be wall, surface or ground-mounted and is available as a single fixture.

THE PRODUCT — A hand sander with an easy-to-grip handle.

Manufacturer's claim — That the sander holds a continuous roll of sandpaper... that, when a change of fresh paper is required, a section of sandpaper can be pulled out and the used sandpaper torn away... that the backing of the sandpaper has a sticky surface that holds it firmly to the sander's working surface, thus preventing the paper from shifting or creasing, which can cause gouges and scoring on wood surfaces... and that individual refill rolls of paper are available in medium, fine and very fine grades.

THE PRODUCT — A utility knife with an interlock protection.

Manufacturer's claim — That this knife has a heavy-duty, die-cast body and a patented nose design to secure the blade between the knife halves... that it has diagonal ribs for non-slip grip, an all-metal retractable slide offering three cutting positions and storage space in the handle for three heavy-duty blades... and that the model was overwhelmingly preferred by

professional workers in an extensive field test, yet has been designed to suit weekend do-it-yourselfers.

THE PRODUCT — A tweezer designed especially for woodworkers.

Manufacturer's claim — That this tweezer has a stainless steel point made for grasping the most difficult of splinters... that it eliminates the need for a splinter probe... that no gouging and cutting are necessary... that the point easily penetrates the skin and picks up particles as fine as a hair... and that it is encased in a vinyl holder to keep it sharp and ready for safe use.

THE PRODUCT — A fake electronic alarm system.

Manufacturer's claim — That this system simulates a professionally installed security and alarm unit... that it includes a stainless steel keyswitch plate with an indicator light that includes a simulated window sensor and an alarm warning decal... that it is installed easily with simple mounting screws included in the kit and without wiring or cutting... that it is powered by two inexpensive batteries that last up to two years... and that it is an inexpensive crime deterrent that can help frighten away vandals and burglars.

(The solar-powered light is manufactured by Intermatic Inc., Intermatic Plaza, Spring Grove, IL 60081; the hand sander by DVI, 3M Center, St. Paul, MN 55144; the utility knife by Stanley Tools, 600 Myrtle St., New Britain, CT 06050; the tweezer by Overview Ltd., 587 Windsor Rd., Woodridge, NJ 07075; and the fake system by WTC Electronics, P.O. Box 314, McKean, PA 16263.)

—Associated Press

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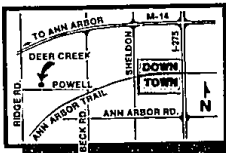
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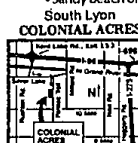
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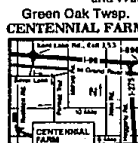


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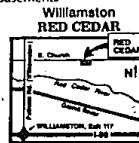
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