

APPLIANCE DOCTOR

Here's how to get mower in shape



JOE GAGNON

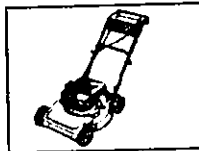
In my research for information in this column I traveled the distance as far away as my own garage and to my good friend Gary Gray's house. If there was ever anybody in this world who would remind you of that television character it has to be my good friend. He owns everything there is for yard care and tools. I left him and went over to my neighbors the Herrimans who have the most beautiful back yard in the world. Naturally, I tell everyone who visits it is my back yard. Mr. Herriman is about to take classes and apply for a classification as master gardener. You can imagine how nice our back yard looks. From these stops I would like to give you some good old fashioned advice on yard tools and equipment.

Are you aware that it is against the law to deface a ladder? You can not drill a hole or put a sticker on a ladder. You can not paint a ladder or do anything that may cause or hide a stress crack against code.

Lawn tools such as weed wackers,

trimmers, etc. work under extreme dirt conditions and should be cleaned after each operation. I have a leaf blower which I use to dry out these products after I put a garden hose to them after each use. I also use the recommended extension cords described in the owners manual of each electrical product. Using two cords instead of one is sometimes a sure way to destroy a product. I would say that the cleanliness of yard and garden products is the biggest factor to the long life of the product.

Last year, after living in a condo for many years, I moved into a house which has a responsibility called yard care. Being that I play hockey two nights a week during the winter months with little exercise in the summer, I purchased a used push type lawnmower for the yard care responsibility. I removed the four wheels and tightened the bearings making the wheels harder to turn. With the extra effort now needed to push this mower across the lawn I created beads of moisture across my forehead the size of large raindrops. I'm sure the folks who walked by and



stopped to chat thought, "This old guy is so outta shape, he's going to drop dead cutting his grass."

I removed the blade of this used lawnmower and had it sharpened and purchased an extra one along the way. I

wanted to make sure the blade was secured properly and I know that a dull blade on a lawnmower can really hurt a good looking lawn. A blade that comes off during operation can cause some rip roaring damage as well. I removed the foam type filter around the carburetor and cleaned it with dishwasher detergent and hot water. I used my brand new leaf blower to dry it. I installed a new recommended spark plug and made sure the connector was tight fitting and wouldn't fall off from vibration. I sprayed all cables and linkages which move with a light oil.

Last year, at the end of the lawn season, I ran the mower until the fuel tank was empty. Old gas will produce a varnish type coating which can cause engine and carburetor problems. I then did the most important thing you can do for any small engine, I changed the

oil, and it is always best to do this before the winter arrives. The old oil has contaminants in it which can cause damage to engine parts during the off period. It is best to do this when the oil is warm and please make sure you are using the recommended oil as described in the owners manual. Most oil filling stations will dispose of the old oil for you.

As with any consumer product, if you take care of it, it will take care of you. A little maintenance on your yard helpers today will allow you to enjoy your summer season with the least amount of aggravation. Now would also be a good time to properly prepare your winter helpers for summer storage. Give the snow thrower, snow mobile and fishing auger a little TLC now, and you will appreciate them next winter when they start up on the first crank. Like a good neighbor, the Appliance Doctor is here.

Joe Gagnon, the Appliance Doctor, will answer your questions about maintaining and repairing large appliances. Gagnon is president of Carmack Appliances in Garden City and does a weekly radio program on WJR-AM. He is author of "First Aid from the Appliance Doctor," available at area bookstores.

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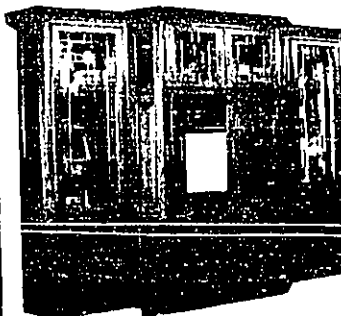
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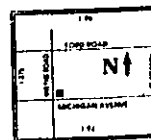
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