

Power Mowers Require Caution

Here's a checklist for the power mower owner who looks forward to a season of safer, easier mowing.

According to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), there are three areas deserving attention—the machine, the operator, and the grounds to be mowed.

For a safer machine, check for loose nuts and bolts, inspect the blades for nicks, imbalance, and dullness; make sure all gas

connections are tight; check your owner's manual for the maintenance—if in doubt, have mower inspected by an authorized serviceman; if you're buying a new mower, make sure the manufacturer certifies that it meets safety standards.

FOR SAFER operation, read owner's manual, learn the rules of safe mower operation; fill gas tank before starting, never refuel a hot engine, clear area of children and pets; when starting and while mowing, keep hands and feet clear of mower; wear hard-toe or safety shoes to protect your feet from the mower's blades—don't mow barefoot or with open sandals; push, do not pull mower forward; stop the engine when the mower clogs, whenever you leave mower, and when wheeling from one surface to another; mow steep slopes sideways, and allow children to operate mower; stop engine and disconnect sparkplug when cleaning or making repairs.

For safer grounds, police areas for stones, bones, small toys, and other foreign objects that could be picked up by mower blades, avoid steep, unsafe slopes (instead of grass, plant ground cover or install retaining wall); keep loose gravel from nearby drives and walks from lawn areas.)

New Spray Kills Tree Fungus Ills

The New York Botanical Garden reports that a new formula spray effectively prevents certain fungus diseases of trees and ornamental plants.

In an experiment on a big horse chestnut tree and two tulip trees, the sprayed half of each tree showed typical symptoms of leaf blotch, a fungus disease that browns leaves, which die prematurely in rainy seasons. The other halves were free of the disease.

Dr. P. P. Pirone, garden plant pathologist, also reported the spray effective in preventing purple spot on American hollies and controlling fungus diseases in lawns.

THE COMMERCIAL preparation is a coordination product of zinc, iron and manganese ethylene dibromide. (It is sold as "Fon," by Rohm and Haas, Philadelphia.)

Care should be used to avoid contact with or inhalation of the spray, which also may harm fish if used near water.

The preparation was intended primarily as a fungicide for turf.



The Green Thumb

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

HOW TO GROW PETUNIAS: Some gardeners can grow petunias and have them bloom riotously from spring till fall. Others have their petunias peter out to midsummer. Why the difference? The answers are in the care you give them.

What's the best care? First, petunias like a uniform supply of water at all times. This doesn't mean you should water them every day. They aren't that thirsty. But if you let them get bone dry, petunias get hard and leggy, and go to seed fast. This means fewer blooms on scrawny plants.

I'm often asked if you should snip off the seed pods from petunia plants. If the petunias are growing in a box or planter, I think it's a fine idea to snip off the faded blooms before they get a chance to form seed. Cut the seed pod off at the base of the flower. Do not simply remove the old bloom as this has no connection with the seed.

Some petunias hold their blossoms better in rain or damp weather. Usually the smaller blossomed types stand up better than the larger ones. Holes in leaves and blooms can be attributed to small injury. They work at night. If plants are cut off close to the ground, blame this on rabbit injury.

KEEP EVERGREENS TRIMMED: Now's a good time to trim your evergreens.

Let's start with the Canadian hemlock. This one can be sheared with grass clippers or hedge shears. Shear off the fuzzy growth so that the tree will be nice and shapely. If the top is too tall, you can clip it back a ways, but don't be too brutal!

Be a barber not a butcher, when you trim any evergreen. Japanese Yews (Yama) both the spreading and upright types can be sheared now.

If you like them, in formal clipped way, this is fine. Trim the spreading type so it will grow into a ball.

Upright types can be sheared into the shape of an inverted ice cream cone. Some feel these sheared specimens look highly artificial, but at least it's better than allowing the evergreens to grow into jungle.

Fence Highlights Planting Beds

Want to do something nice for your garden? Highlight planting beds with a backdrop of weathered fencing. Rough, silvered wood has a beauty all its own, but it's also one of the finest complements possible for plant materials.

Though new fencing will appear raw, if you acquire the silver sheen in just a season. Homeowners can hasten the process by finishing the wood with bleaching oil or a clear water repellent. In sunny yards, the fence will weather more rapidly if sprayed regularly with the garden hose.

For a shaded yard and homeowners too impatient to wait for nature, new fencing can be finished with a single coat of exterior-grade, semi-transparent stain in a driftwood shade. The transition between stained finish and weathering will be barely perceptible.

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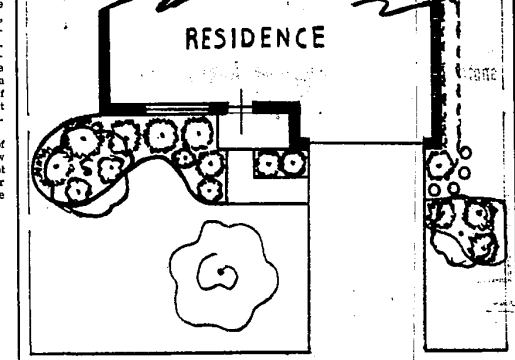
Only Add Water

Never change water in the container that holds a cut flower arrangement. Instead, it's best to just add water as it is needed.

IS YOUR NEW HOUSE STILL WAITING FOR ITS "EXTERIOR DECORATING"?

(LANDSCAPING, THAT IS!) If you like to be your own decorator, we can help you choose the shrubs and trees you need, at no extra cost. If you'd like "professional" help, with your landscape plan, bring in a picture of your home, and dimensions. Your plan will be drawn to scale so you can plant it. We will be glad to help.

Wayne Jones

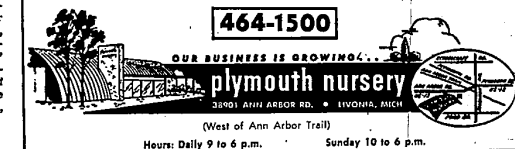


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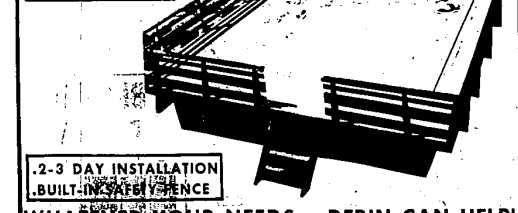
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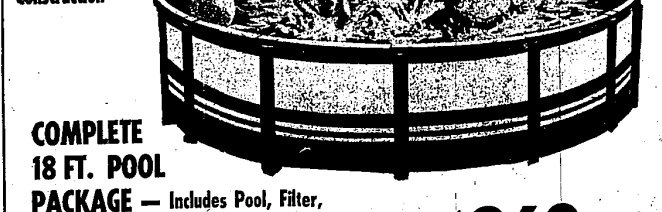
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