



Let's talk about Horses

By Jennifer Barr

Horses seem to be accident prone beasts — fragile, delicate, bent on self-destruction. Owners conscious of this characteristic are careful to produce absolutely safe sterile pastures for horses. Hole and rock free. Riding paddocks are level, soft and dry. Beautiful.

On the whole, I disagree with this practice. If one has a \$30,000 brood mare carrying a foal by Northern Dancer one definitely feels the need to wrap her in cotton wool. However, for the ordinary pleasure horse, used for trail riding, hunting, jumping, or endurance riding, such obstacle-free grounds are no help at all.

Think of the horse who never gets used to watching his feet. He has nothing to bother him in his field until he's suddenly taken out for a ride and has to travel all kinds of terrain. He hasn't a prayer.

If he has some obstacles and rough going every day he becomes much more handy on his feet.

Hidden holes
Naturally, the fences should be in good shape. We don't need that kind of obstacle. But a ground-hog hole is not a sin if the horse can see it.

I used to worry about holey fields until a dear friend who'd raised hunters all her life told me to stop worrying. She felt that pulling the long grass away from the hidden holes was all that was necessary. The horses would become accustomed to watching their way of going and would therefore be safer out hunting.

She also believed in leaving some rocks and logs in the fields and in not levelling the schooling paddock. If there were undulations and some grassy areas while the horse was cantering or jumping he wouldn't be upset if he met these things in competition, she thought.

In fourteen years of raising horses, I've found she was right. Playful colts are much wiser and stronger running in rough pasture. When the time comes for saddle training, they are better balanced and already conscious of watching where they are going. Of course, there is some danger of a colt hurting himself, although many a horse has managed to do a lot of damage to himself without any obstacles. However, your son may fall and bruise himself but you're not going to stop him climbing trees — the benefits outweigh the potential danger.

Don't fret
The horse schooled in a level, harrowed dirt arena rapidly becomes sloppy, stale and careless. When he goes out on the trail or to a show he is apt to fall on his face.

So don't fret if your pastures don't look like E. P. Taylor's, or your riding ring looks more like a sheep pen than the Coliseum. Think how proud you'll be when he gallops successfully through rough plough out hunting or manoeuvres a pile of cut timber without dumping you on his neck.

I would appreciate hearing from anyone having a Welsh type pony at stud — object: matrimony to a hunter mare of ours hoping to produce a large pony for daughter, Erica. The stud does not have to be registered, just of a Welsh type — good action, elegant, and fine-boned, preferably with his own step-ladder.

Ebenezer

by Mrs. Ron McLean
Frieda Thompson, Betty Snow, Holly Saulnier, Laura Hower and Isobel McLean attended a U.C.W. workshop at Rev. United Church.

Rev. Bob Kail spoke on impressions of his recent visit to New York.

Birthday
Birthday greetings to Darlene Hower.

Mrs. John Kitching, Rev. R. Finley and Mrs. B. Warren are all making good progress.

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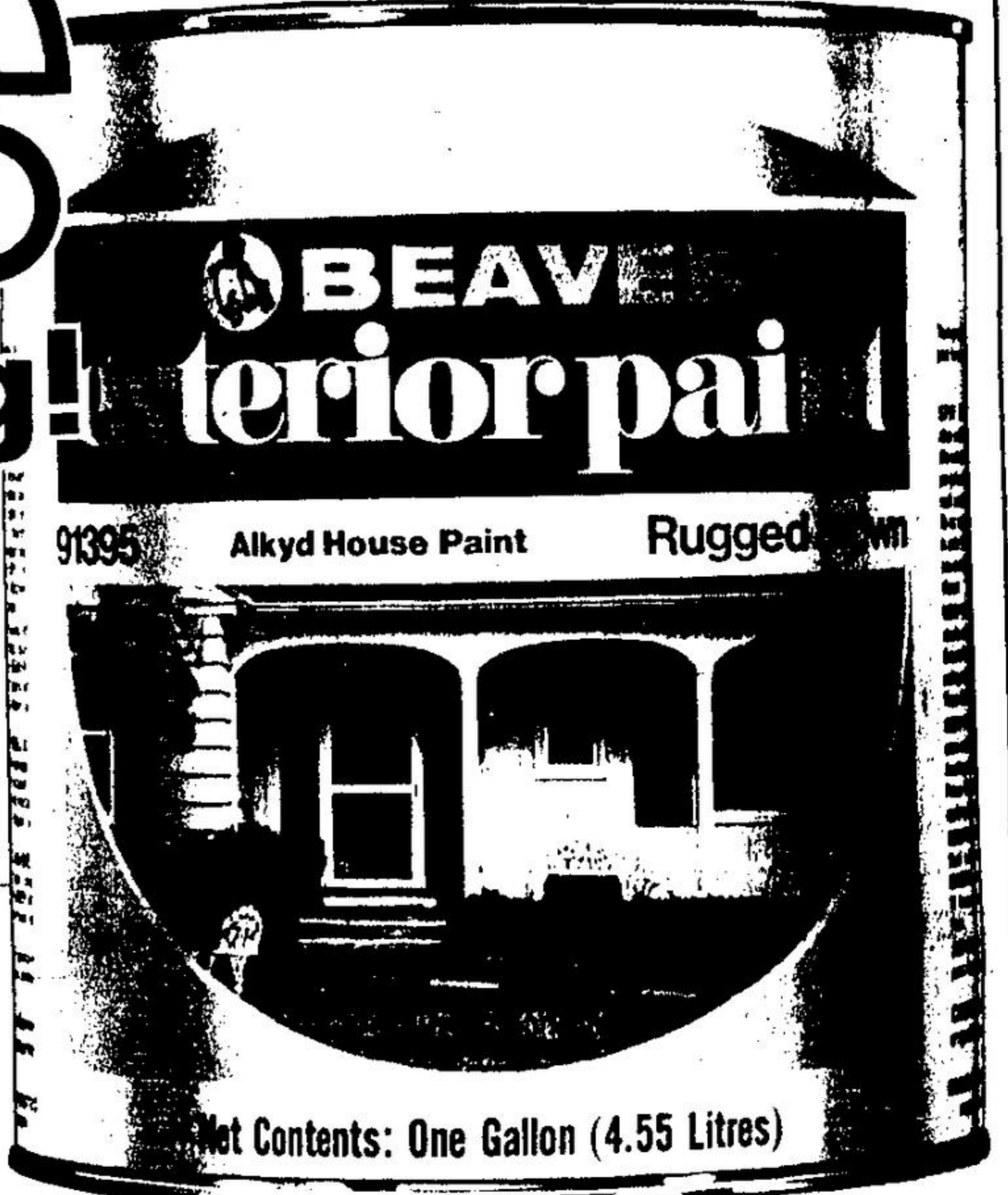
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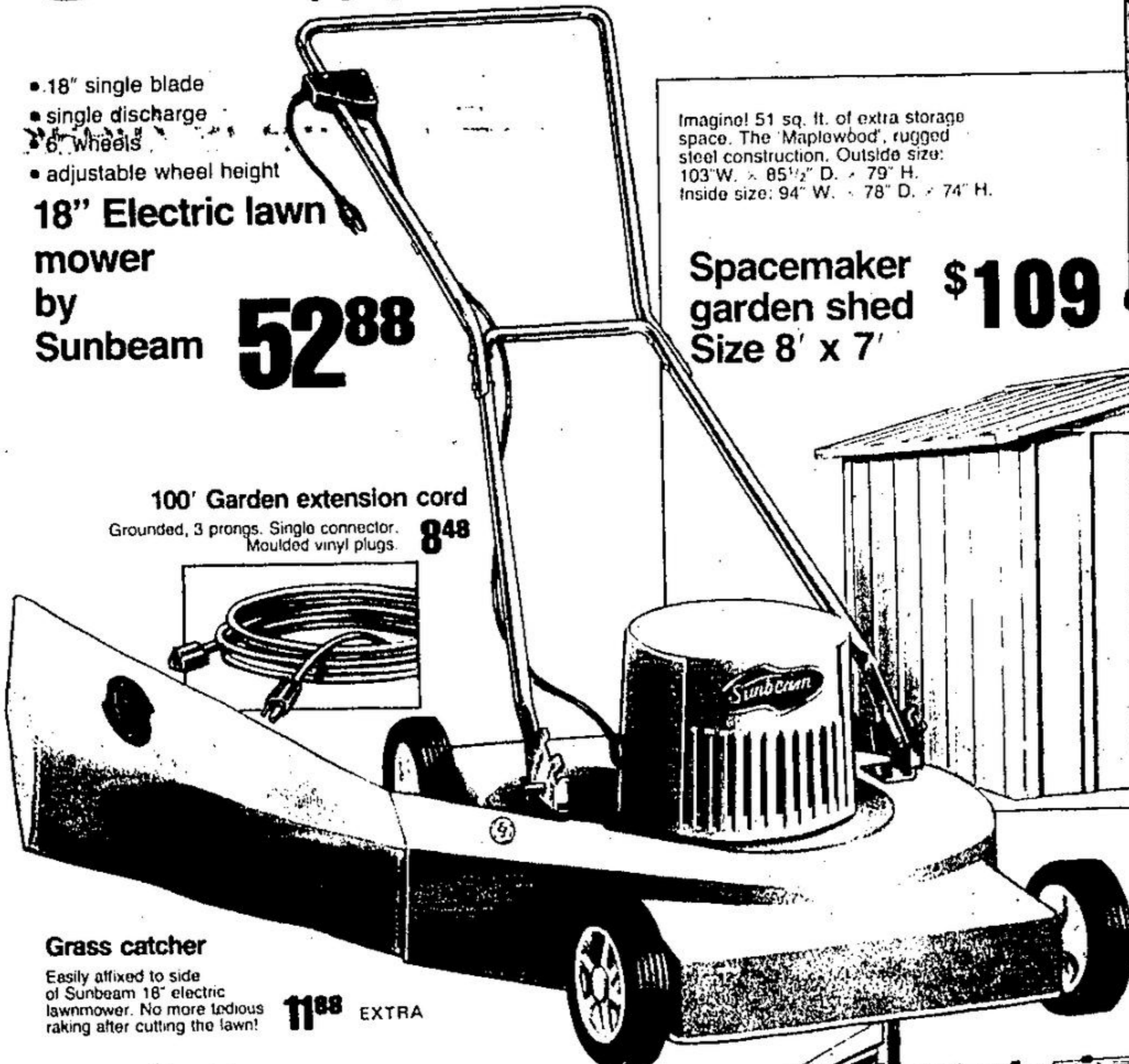
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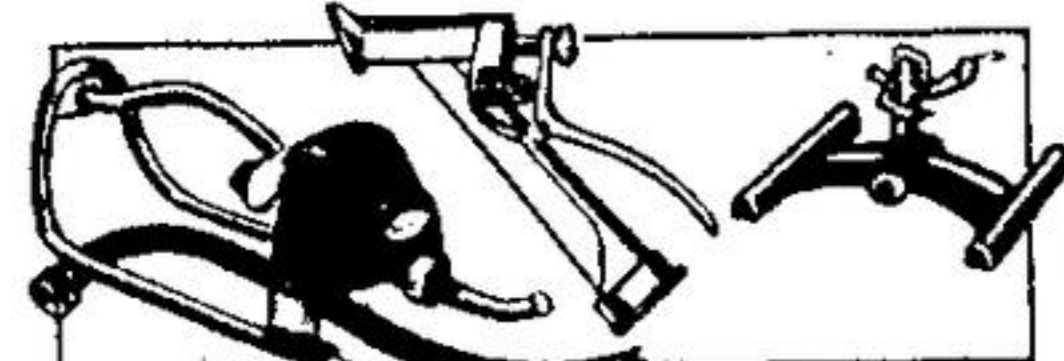


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