

## Autumn should leaf me alone

For many people, autumn is their favorite time of the year. It's a time to revel in the kaleidoscope of color Mother Nature paints on the landscape.

And, while I can certainly appreciate the vivid yellows, oranges and reds as the sun bounces off a maple tree during this season, that doesn't mean I like cleaning up after Mother Nature when her show is over.

In other words, I hate the mess she leaves behind with all those dead leaves (Shouldn't it be leafy?).

While kids may love to frolic in large piles of decaying vegetation (and that's what leaves are at this time of the year), I'm sure many adults like myself find the entire exercise of raking leaves a waste of time.

For years, I had to endure the autumn mess of a large willow tree on our front lawn. Thin leaves and branches from this 70-foot monstrosity covered our lawn for most of October and November no matter how diligent wifey and I were at raking them up.

Two years ago we got smart and had the willow tree chopped down (Note to any flannel-wearing environmentalist thinking of chaining themselves to my garage door in protest: The tree was dying.) However, while that has reduced the amount of leaves I have to rake, it hasn't enabled me to keep a leaf-free lawn. That's because the leaves from my neighbor's rare white elm love to congregate on my property.

Thankfully, I live in an area where the city sucks up the leaves twice each fall as long as you rake them to the edge of the road. However, that doesn't help much in the backyard as I collect those leaves into an oversized barbecue cover and then carry them out to the roadside pile.

I tried ignoring the leaves on the lawn one autumn but found that after a couple snowfalls, then a thaw or two, there is an incredi-

THIS  
'N  
THAT



John McGhie

bly soggy mess that tends to kill the grass.

I've considered investing in a leaf blower but I just don't think those things make life any easier for an anti-gardener like me. I've watched my neighbors use them and they look like spastic cowboys trying to round up a herd of stubborn cows. It also seems to take them twice as long to get the leaves into one pile as it would have if they raked them.

Last weekend, I decided to adopt another approach to collecting the leaves: I ran the damn things over with the lawnmower.

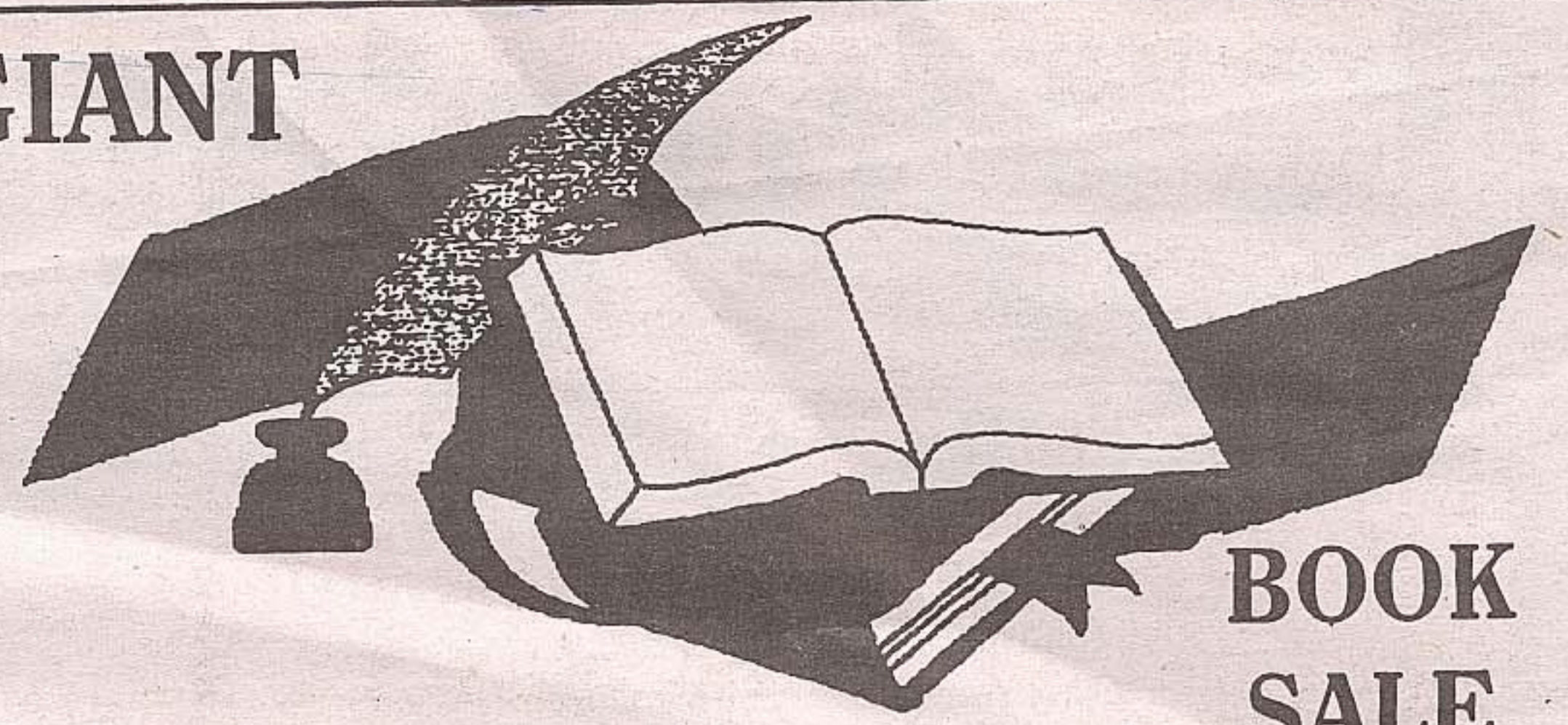
Well, let me tell you folks, this works just fine. The lawnmower chews them up and spits the leaves into the lawnmower bag. I then emptied the lawnmower bag onto the roadside pile. In 45 minutes I was done and spent the better part of Sunday looking at my gorgeous green, leaf-free lawn.

Even wifey was impressed, although after I pulled her to the living room window for the fifth time to look at my handiwork she was getting a bit annoyed.

However, her level of annoyance paled in comparison to mine the next morning when I looked outside to marvel once again at the front lawn and found it completely covered in a fresh batch of leaves.

It seems I forgot the first rule of leaf-raking: Do not ignore the wind factor.

## GIANT



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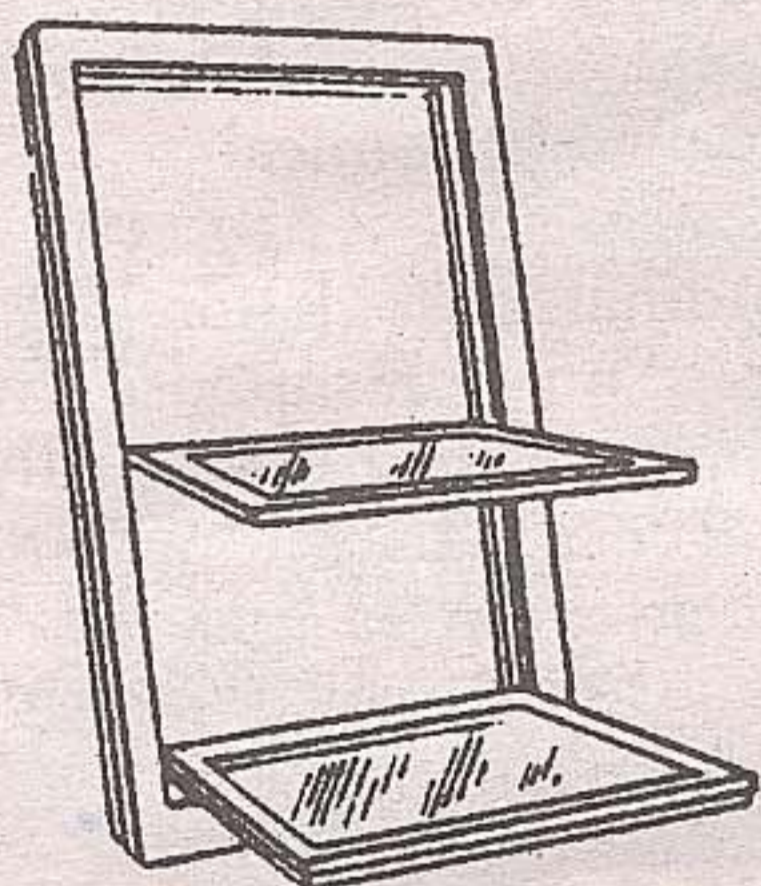
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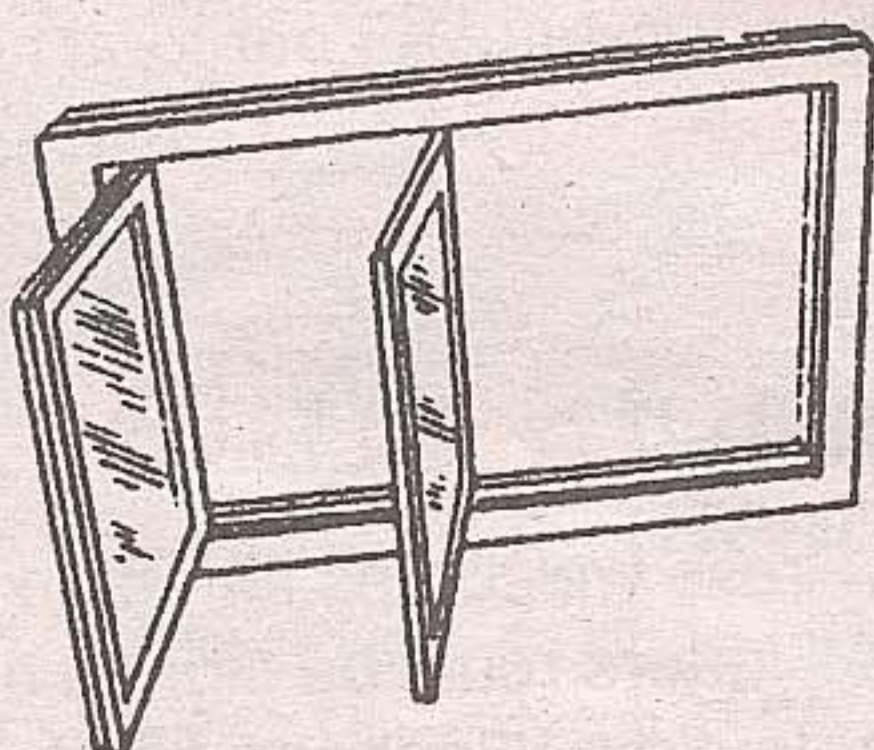
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Tilt Double Hung



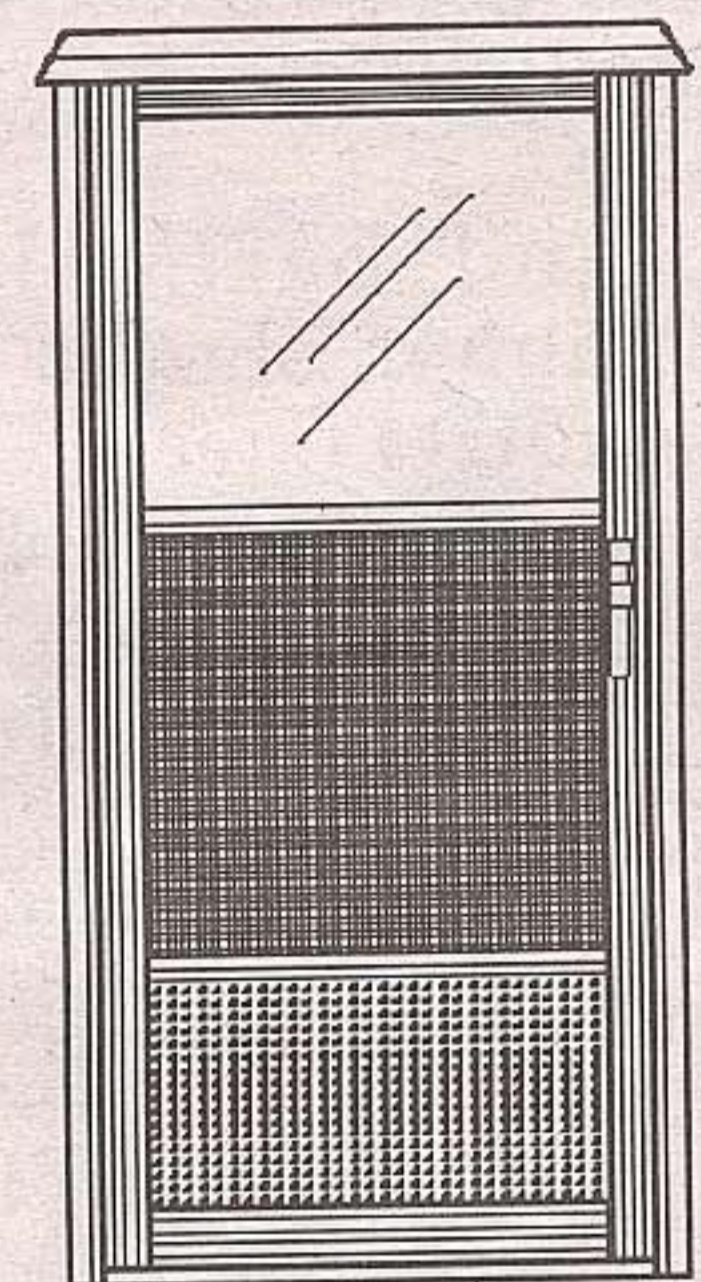
Horizontal Tilt Slider

# STARR GLASS & MIRROR

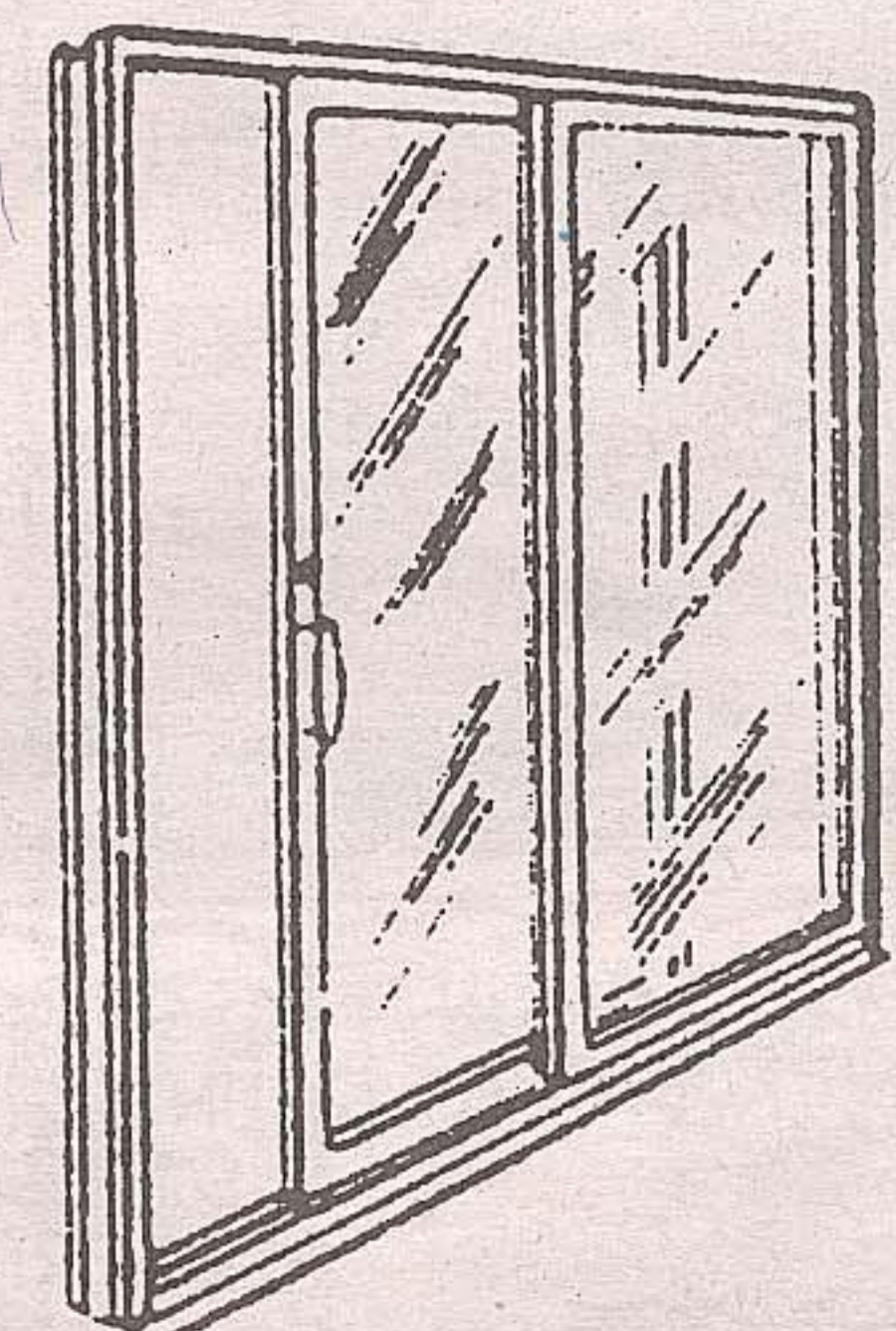
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