

For safety's sake be sure to check your lawnmower

In all the excitement of the warm weather and the opportunity to finally clean up the lawn and tidy the garden, don't forget to safety check the lawnmower before you head out to the backyard.

Make sure the blade, engine mounting bolts and all nuts and screws are tight, and if you have a grass catcher, check for holes or worn spots.

If the blade is bent or cracked, replace it. An unbalanced blade causes vibration that could damage the motor. If the blade is in good shape, then clean it thoroughly and sharpen it if necessary.

To clean grime off the mower, it's best not to use a hose. Wash it carefully with a pail of water and keep the water out of the motor and electrical connections. Never wash an electric mower while it's plugged in.

Once you're satisfied that the mower is in good shape, don't forget to keep yourself safe, too! Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind:

- Always wear sturdy footwear.
- Don't put your hands or feet near or under rotating parts, and keep yourself and bystanders clear of the discharge opening.

- Never attempt to adjust the mower's wheel height while it is running.

- Allow enough time for the blades to stop before crossing gravel driveways or sidewalks.

- Shut the mower off and, if it's powered by electricity, unplug it before doing anything to the machine.

- Even if an electric mower stalls because the exhaust port or blades are clogged with clippings, it is still powered until it is unplugged. This means it could restart itself once the clippings have been removed.

- To lessen the risk of accidentally pulling the mower down over your foot, mow across the face of slopes rather than up and down.

- Never operate the mower without all the proper guards, plates and other protective devices in place.

- You would be surprised just how much junk can accumulate on your lawn. Check the area you're planning on mowing and pick up any sticks, stones or garbage.

So cut the injury risks before you cut the grass by keeping these safety tips in mind every time you mow the lawn.



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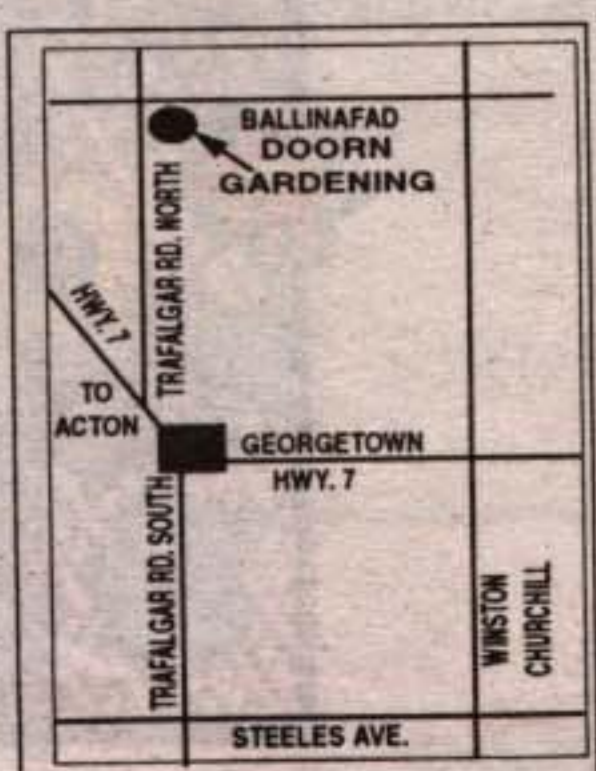
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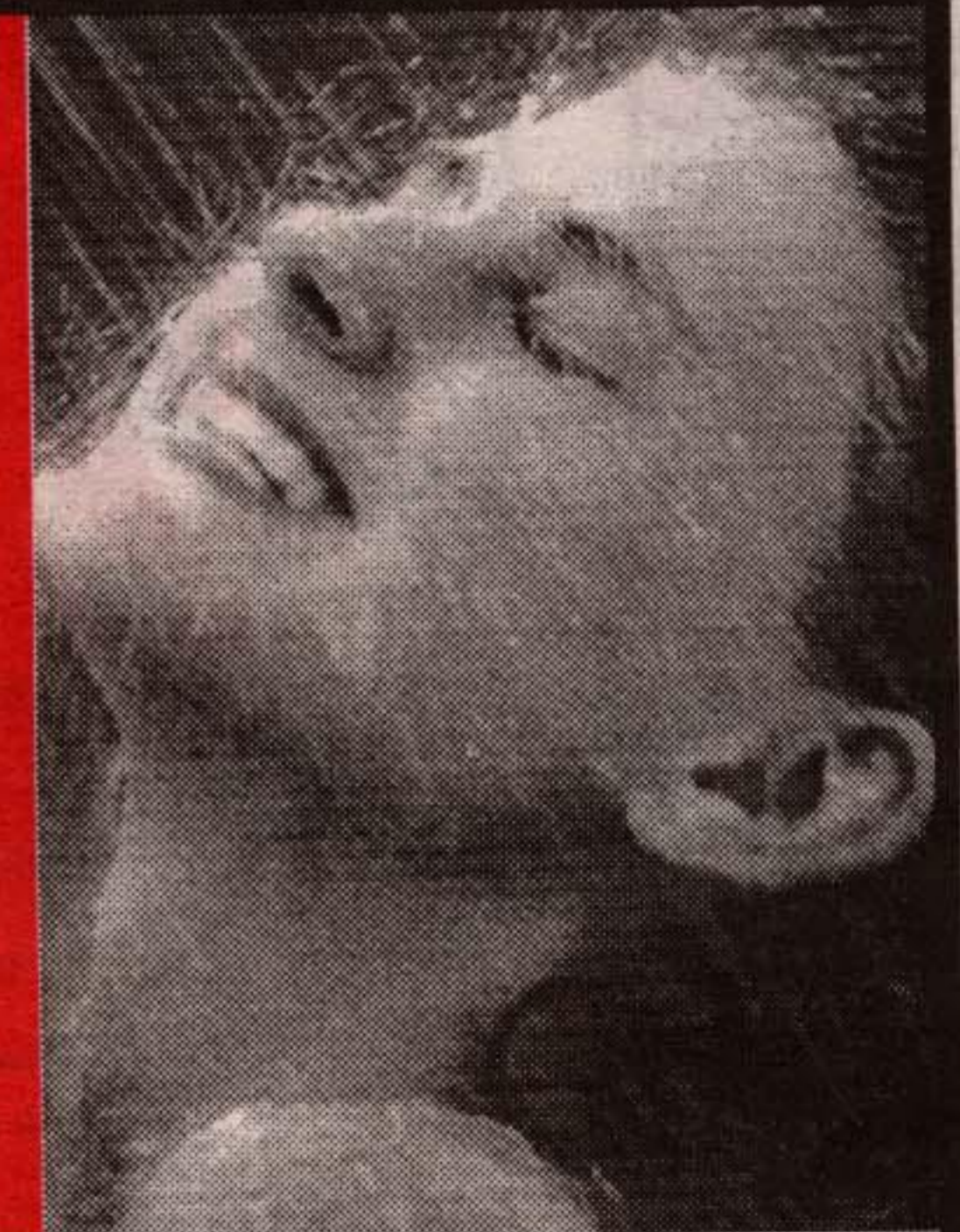
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