

smart *alternative*

The longest drought in 48 years! How does your lawn look?

Melanie Cummings

Pesticides. Drought. Air pollution. These are the detriments to our senseless seasonal pursuit of a green lawn that, despite valiant effort and expense turns yellow by mid-summer due to soaring heat and humidity anyway.

The alternative offered by Artificial Grass & Landscaping (AGL) is not only a more environmentally-friendly option that eliminates reliance on synthetic chemicals and increasingly scarce water resources; artificial grass also saves time and money.

The lawns we slave over are potentially hazardous to our health and the earth. Lawn mowers powered by gasoline burn oil and gas that emit the same air pollutants as driving a car would on a 600-kilometre trip. And weed trimmers, edgers and leaf blowers contribute to five per cent of urban smog.

Toxic pesticides used to keep bugs at bay pose health risks for humans, causing disease, aggravating airways and inflicting long-term damage to our bodies and our pets' bodies. So much so that several Canadian cities have banned pesticides for cosmetic use. To boot, the chemical-laden runoff from pouring an average of 46 pounds of the stuff on our lawns each year eventually seeps into our groundwater.

Environment Canada estimates the average lawn soaks in just over 14,000 litres of water each year.

Considering that Hamilton/Burlington is facing the lowest amount of rainfall this summer than seen in 48 years of weather tracking, water conservation is paramount.

Between May and July only 100 millimetres of rain fell. The average is 246 mm. That's

significantly less than the previous drought record set in the summer of 1971 when only 123 mm of rain fell.

All this for the sake of green ground cover? Does the end justify the means?

Artificial Grass & Landscaping is a Stoney Creek-based. The company's CEO Ivan Couto has been installing sports fields worldwide for 18 years. Over the past two years he has adapted this know-how for residential properties.

No weeding, watering, or mowing and still the reward of a lush lawn to enjoy year round. What's to be wary of?

Using blades made of polyethylene fibres residents can opt for a variety of colour and texture options: the two-tone 'Monte Carlo' looks like a mix of Bluegrass and Fescue mix.

The space between the blades of grass is filled with black rubber pellets made from recycled tires which are cryogenically frozen and do the job dirt does in stabilizing the grass blades.

All these materials are non-toxic, and safe for children and pets in more ways than one. Not only does the surface cushion on impact from a 12-foot fall height, it's easy for wheelchairs to traverse.

Resistant to fire, salt and animal waste, the installed ground cover is priced at \$8 to \$15 per square foot and carries an eight year long warranty.

Excavation, grading for proper drainage and a stone based screening is required prior to laying down the artificial sod. (Sand isn't used to avoid water retention, which fosters mold, bacteria and weed growth.)

For more information about an



This backyard was in desperate of some serious TLC. Simply by replacing the tired, worn-out grass with an artificial lawn from AGL and creating a charming walkway, the area has been transformed into a relaxing and beautiful living space.

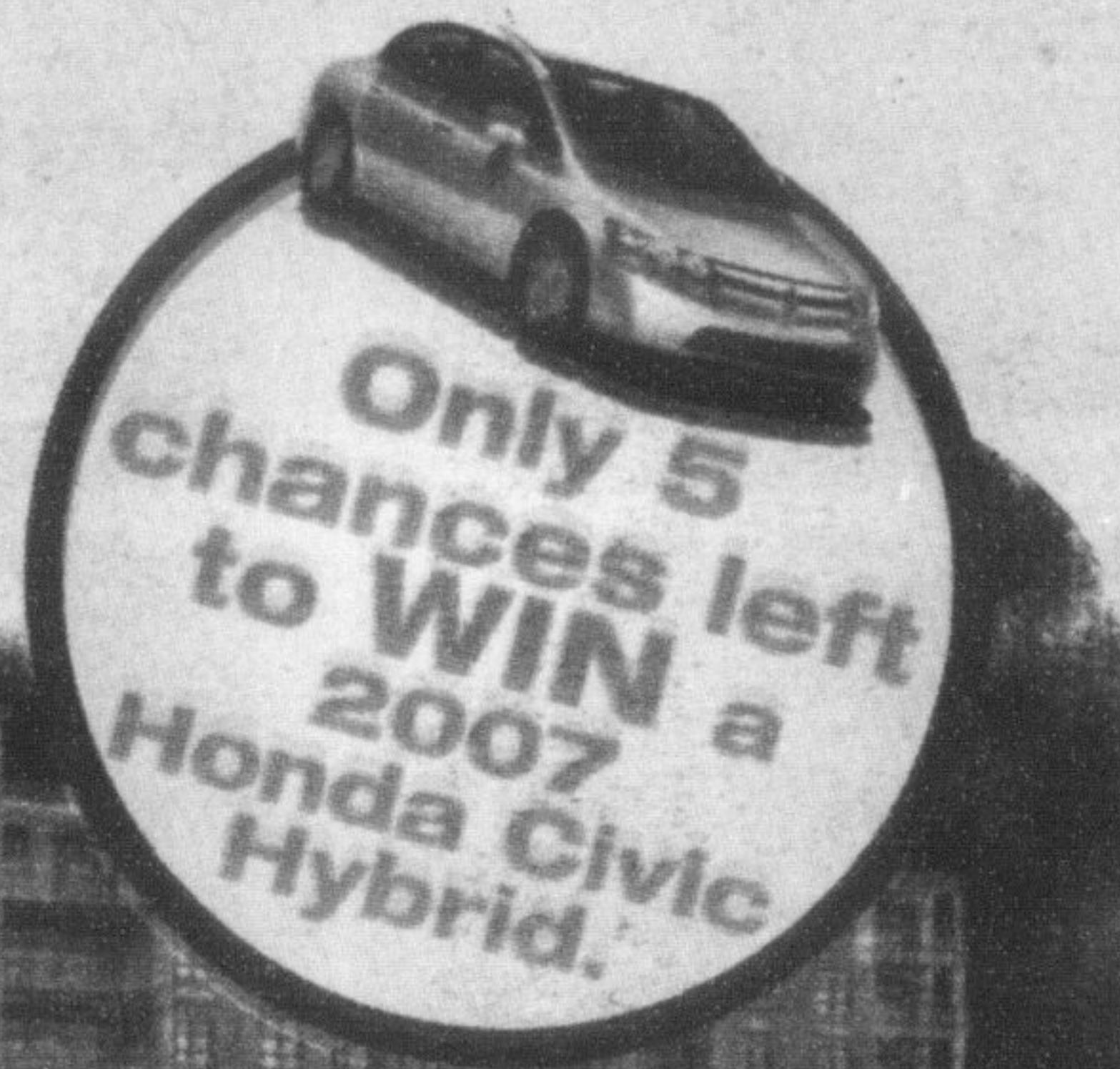


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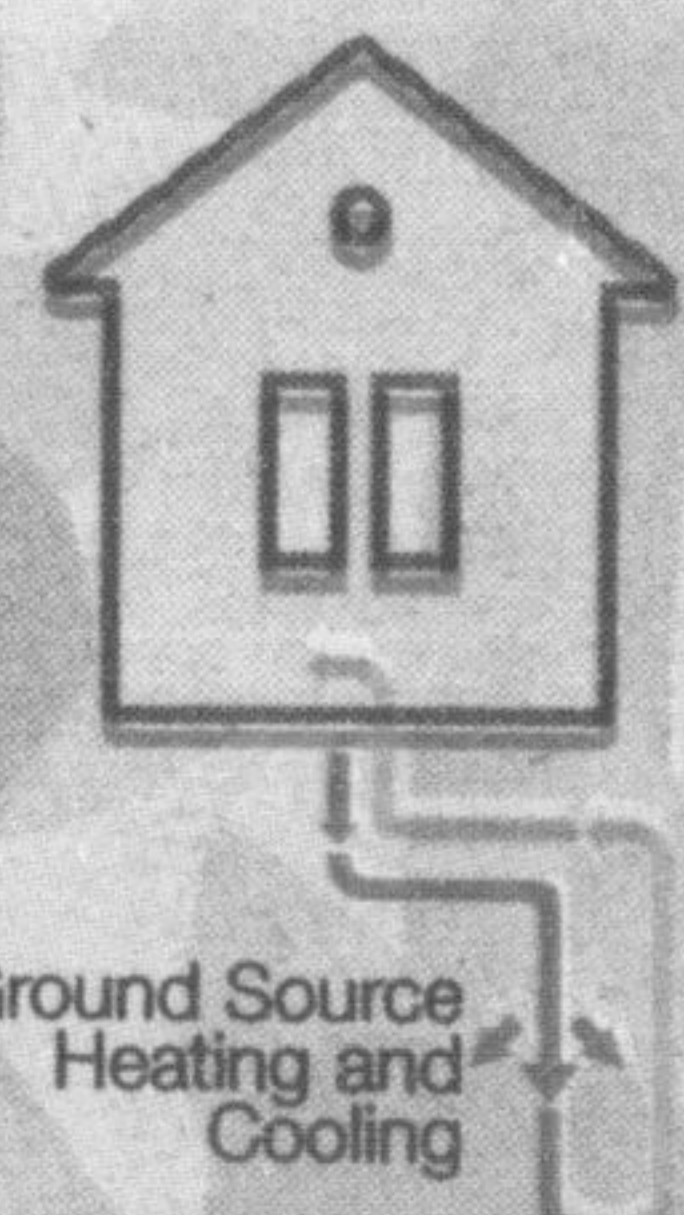
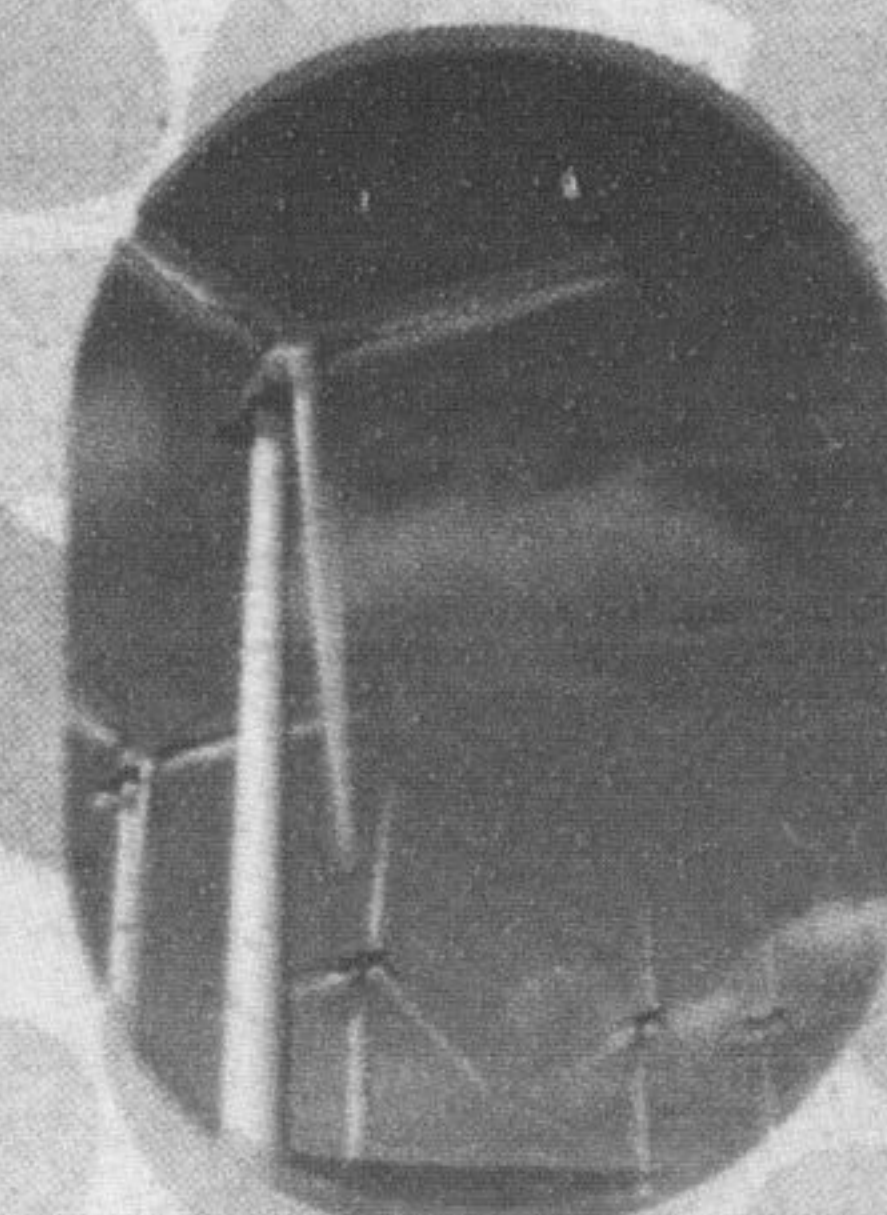
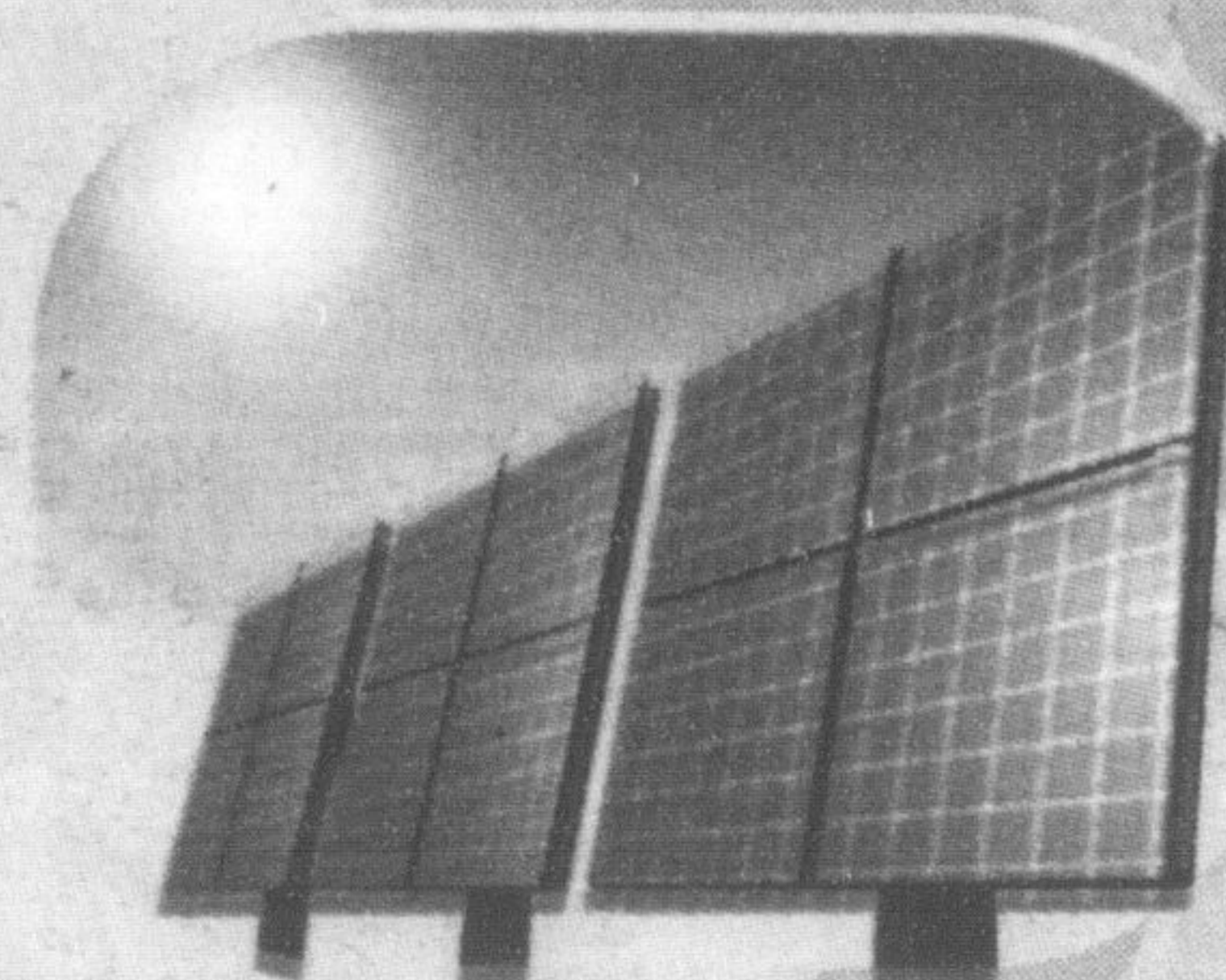
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