

Dear John:



John Deere Answers Your Lawn and Garden Woes

Musical Mower Blade

Dear John: As an active member of the local theatre guild, I'm Les Miserables about my lawn's brown grass tips. If I Were A Rich Man, I'd tear up the lawn and start over. Any other ideas?

Dear Music Man: A lawn with brown grass tips can resemble The Hunchback of Notre Dame, with uneven grass blades leaning to one side. A dull mower blade can also tear grass tips causing the turf to develop a lean or grain. Your lawn will be One Singular Sensation if you keep the mower blade sharp. Review an operator's manual for specifics on how to sharpen a mower blade, but in general, sharpen the blade after each 25 hours of use. Use a file or grinding wheel, and sharpen at the same angle the blade was originally filed. Make sure to leave at least 1/64-inch/close to 1/2 mm of metal on the blade edge for strength. Next, check the blade for balance by centering it on the edge of a ruler. Another smart way to get the job done is to take the blade to a dealer for sharpening. Keep your mower blade sharp and life will be a Cabaret, ol' chum!

Dear John: I can't stand to throw anything away. I have vegetable seeds left over from last year, and even more this year. Must I part with them?

Dear Nest-Egg Ned: To test whether the seeds you've accumulated over the last few years are still usable, fold some into a damp paper towel and place them in a warm spot for a week

or so. If more than half of them germinate, the seeds are worth planting. Sow more seeds from leftover packets than usual, though, in case the germination rate has decreased.

You can keep this year's stockpile of seeds safe until next year if you store them properly. It's best to keep them in their original packaging. Place them in tightly sealed jars or tin cans and store the containers in a cool place. To reduce humidity in a container pour a little powdered milk on a tissue, staple it shut, and put it in the jar with the seeds.

Dear John: I like to sleep late on weekends, but my neighbour insists I should water my lawn early in the morning. Does he know something I don't?

Dear Slumbering Sam: In this case, the early bird will get the worm and a well-watered lawn. It's best to water in the morning—say about 9 a.m.—so grass blades will dry by evening. A wet, soggy lawn is an open invitation for pests and disease.

Also, evaporation is at its peak during sunny afternoon hours, and water won't reach grass roots if the sun has a chance to swallow it up.

Finally, neighbourhood water consumption is usually highest in the afternoon, which can reduce water pressure and increase the amount of time needed to supply your lawn with the recommended water of one inch/25 mm a week.

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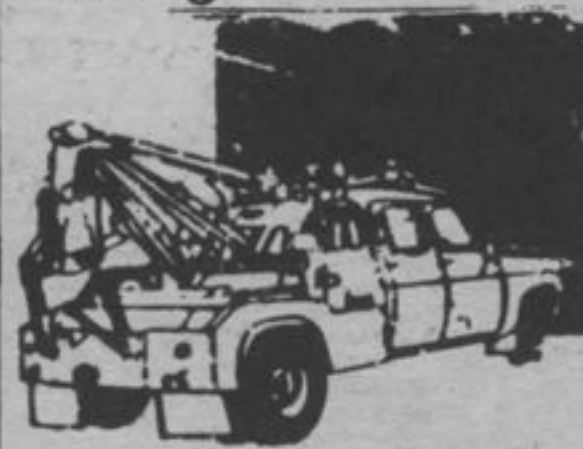
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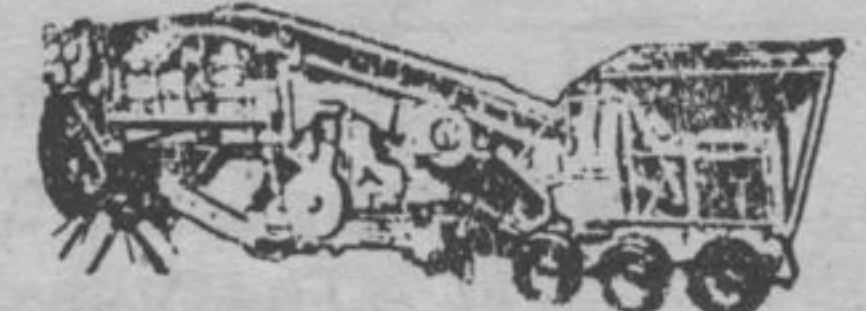
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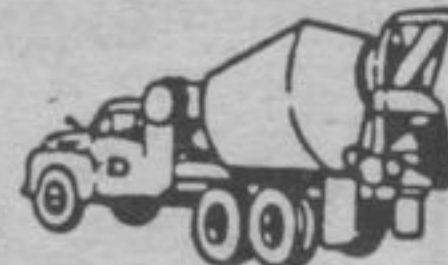
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