

Dear John:

John Deere Answers Your Lawn and Garden Woes



Flower Garden Guilt

Dear John: I'm a devoted mother, but don't have much time to care for a flower garden. Can you suggest a flower that won't make me feel guilty?

Dear Manic Mom: Save your hugs and kisses for your children and maintain your peace of mind with a garden of verbenas and nasturtiums.

You won't need to fuss over verbenas because they'll do well in half-day sunlight and stand up to drought. If you insist on fretting, ideal conditions are full sun, sandy soil and cool temperatures.

Nasturtiums thrive on neglect. If you mother them too much by over-watering or fertilizing, they'll produce lush foliage but few flowers. They do best in all-day sun. But don't worry; they also thrive in half-day or even filtered sunlight.

Dear John: How much water does my lawn really need? I don't want to waste this precious commodity.

Dear Frugal Fred: In general, a lawn needs to be watered to a depth of about 15 to 20 cm each week to help grass roots grow deep into the soil. This means you should water your lawn with about 2 cm of water a week.

To measure 2 cm of water, mark some empty cans 2 cm from the bottom. Set the containers around the outer periphery of the sprinkler's watering zone and time how long it takes for the water to reach the mark. Then water the lawn for that length of time each

week, if nature doesn't do it for you.

Follow the "golden rule" of residential irrigation, watering deeply but infrequently, and only when the lawn really needs it.

Dear John: I just bought a garden tiller. Can you give me some advice on how to use it safely?

Dear Cautious Cultivator: Basic power equipment precautions apply to garden tillers as well as mowers. Read the operator's manual carefully to study controls before tilling your garden. Keep your shirttail tucked in and wear hard shoes and long pants when tilling. Make sure children and pets are far away from the work area. Leave a strip of untilled earth between the first passes of the tiller, and then go back over the untilled strips. Start with the depth bar at a setting of about 7 cm at first, and then switch to a deeper setting of up to 15 or 18 cm. Maintain your balance when tilling by avoiding ditches, slopes, chain link fences or concrete patios. Shut off the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before going near the tiller tines, and never refuel when the engine is running or hot. Make sure to keep the tiller in good repair, and keep safety shields in place.

Never allow children to operate a tiller. And make sure to store it, after the engine has cooled, in a place where children can't touch the tines.

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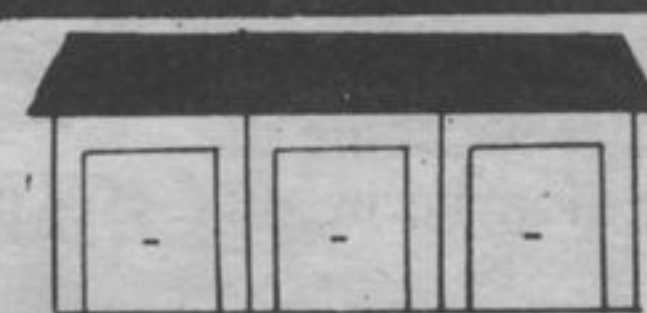


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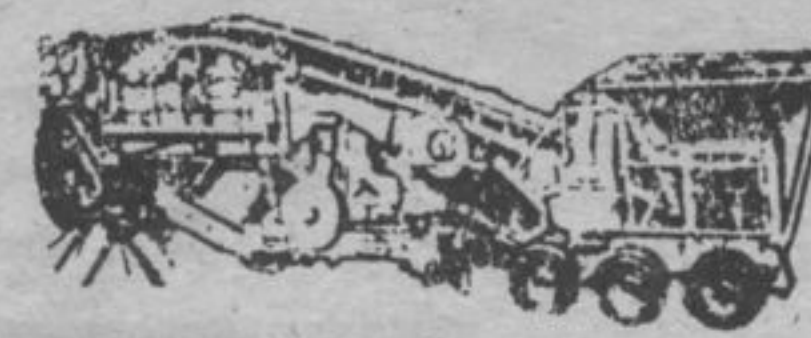
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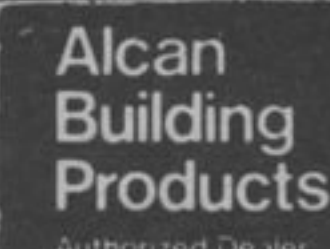


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