

# Spring Home and Garden

## Country decor doesn't have to be cute or cluttered

If you like most North Americans, you caught the country bug sometime during the last decade.

Chances are, some country-inspired furniture, fabric or accessories are in your home right now.

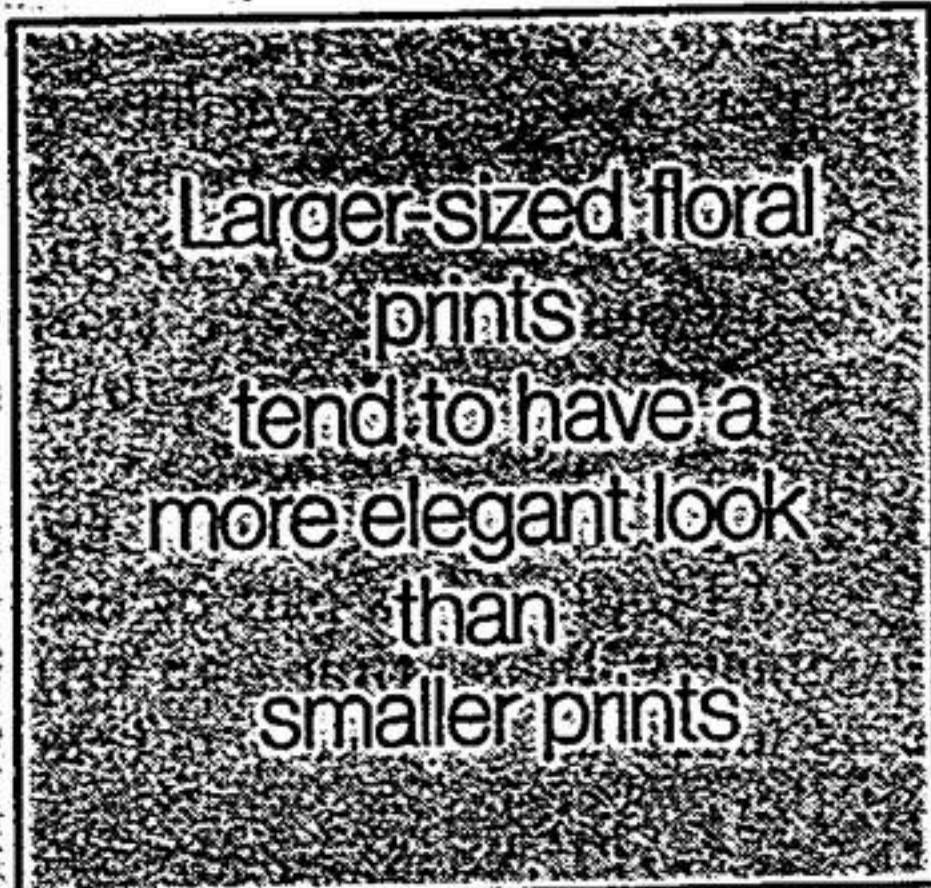
### Unpretentious and warm

Whatever the origin, country-style decorating usually means lively, appealing colors, lots of warm textures, floral prints and plaids, unpretentious furniture made of wicker, twigs or painted wood, and accessories with an old-fashioned bent.

But what if it's time to give your countrified interiors a

new look — without breaking the bank for a total re-do? Here are some tips for adding a touch of city sophistication to down-home charm:

Too many floral prints can make country too cute. Replace some of the florals with clean, classic stripes or checks. Many fabric lines are coordinated with striped or plaid fabrics for a fresher look. Solid painted walls or subtly textured wall-



paper will make floral prints stand out more effectively.

Speaking of florals, try varying the scale for an updated look. Larger-sized floral prints tend to have a more elegant look than smaller prints,

which can look too quaint.

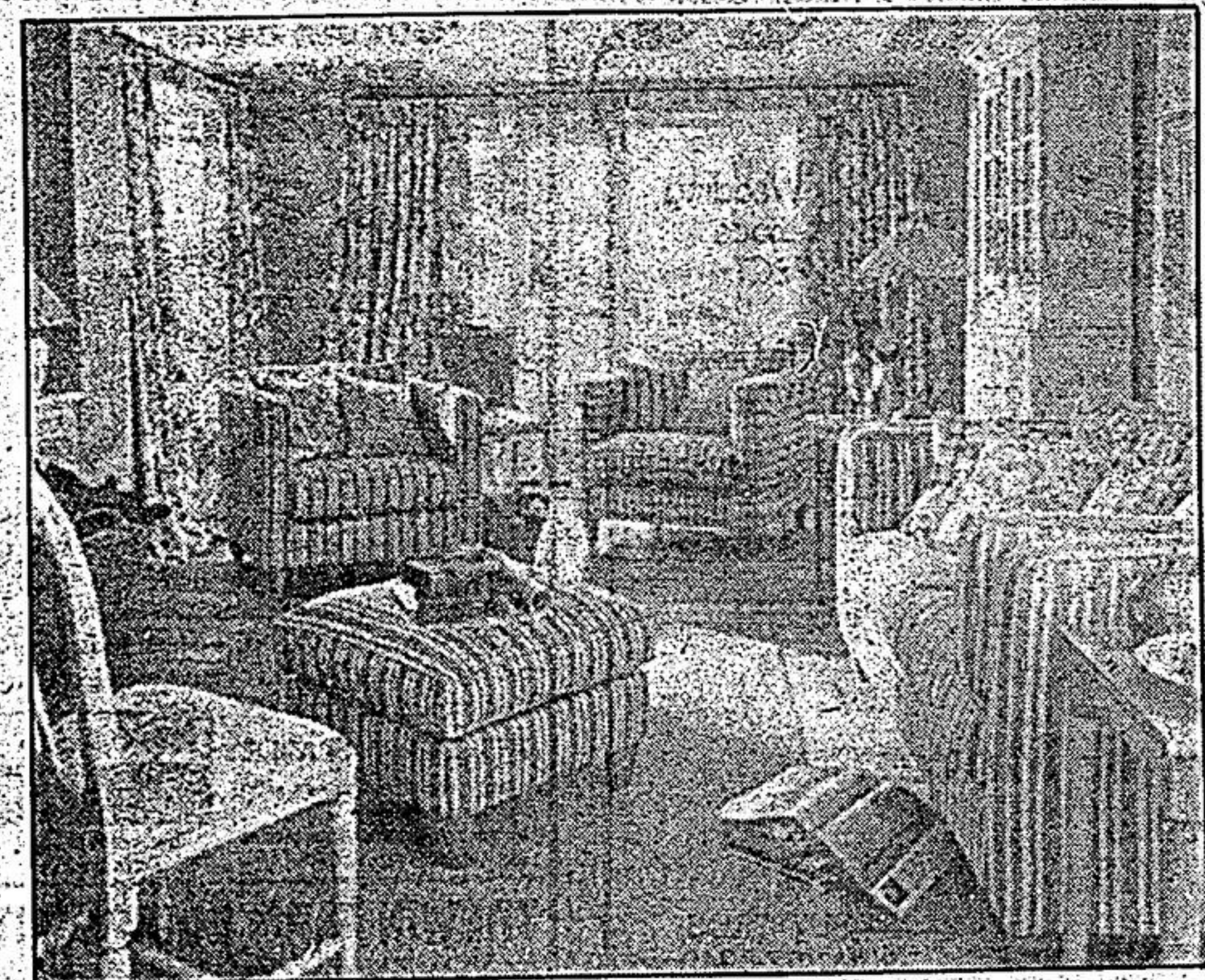
Keep the palette soft and simple, with fewer colors. Soothing neutral or muted backgrounds with a few dark or bright accents will give a more polished look to your rooms and serve as a wonderful background for treasured objects.

Opt for one or more pieces of furniture with a more classic or contemporary look, in simple shapes, to mix with more country-inspired ones.

Substitute crisp piping, welting or braid — either matching or contrasting — for country-cute ruffles or trims, to achieve a more tailored look.

### Bare wood

Don't get carried away with lots of small, folksy floor coverings such as rag or hooked rugs. Bare wood floors stained a rich warm shade, understated sisal carpets, or Oriental or geometric-patterned rugs create a more sophisticated mood.



Choose artwork and collectibles for your walls selectively, and avoid having too many pieces with a cliched country look. Use simple, un-gimmicky frames and avoid fussy ribbon or fabric-bow picture hangers. Try leaning paintings or posters on mantels or tabletops for a more casual look.

### A touch of elegance

Add more elegant accessories to the rustic or folklore. An eclectic mix of materials —

brass, silver, crystal and porcelain combined with wrought iron, wood, twigs, wicker and ceramics — can give your rooms energy and keep them from being boring.

Choose accessories and collectibles selectively — too many can result in a "country-store" look.

A few good pieces will make a stronger statement than lots of second-rate things. Also try to group related objects together for more design impact.

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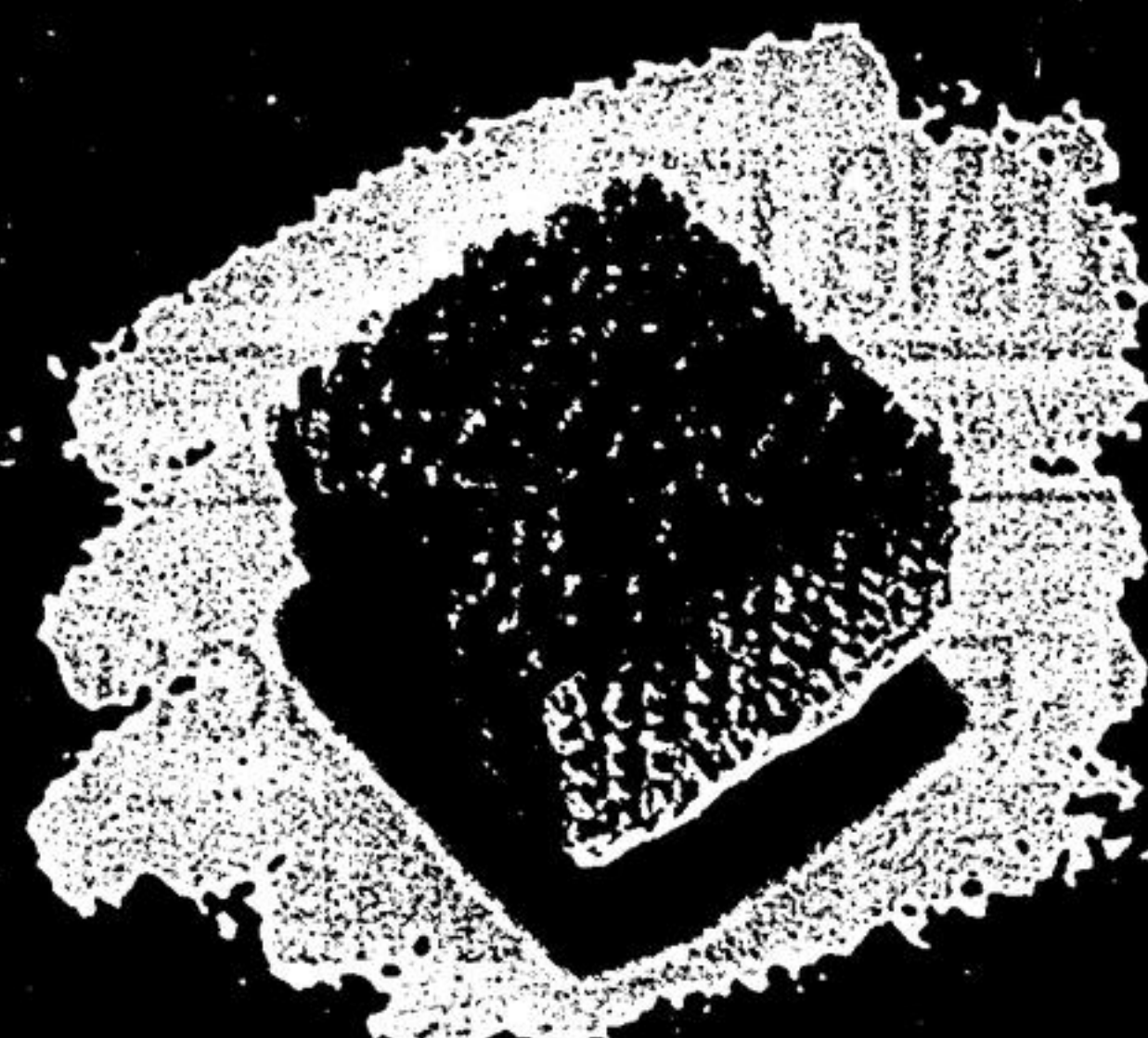
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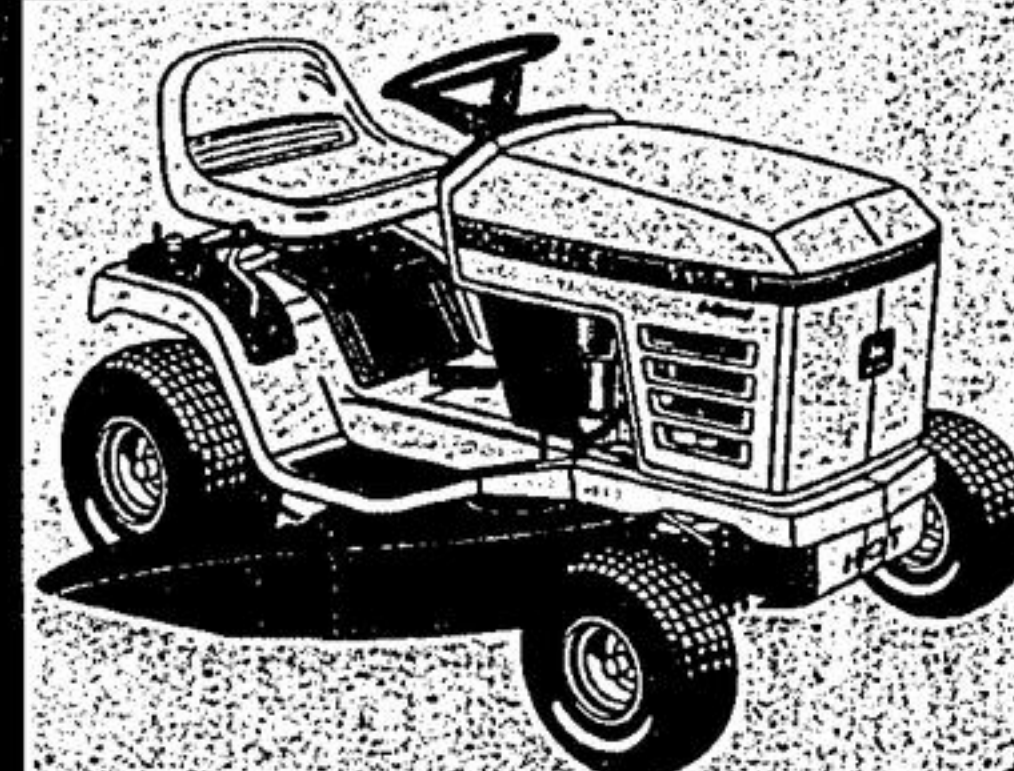
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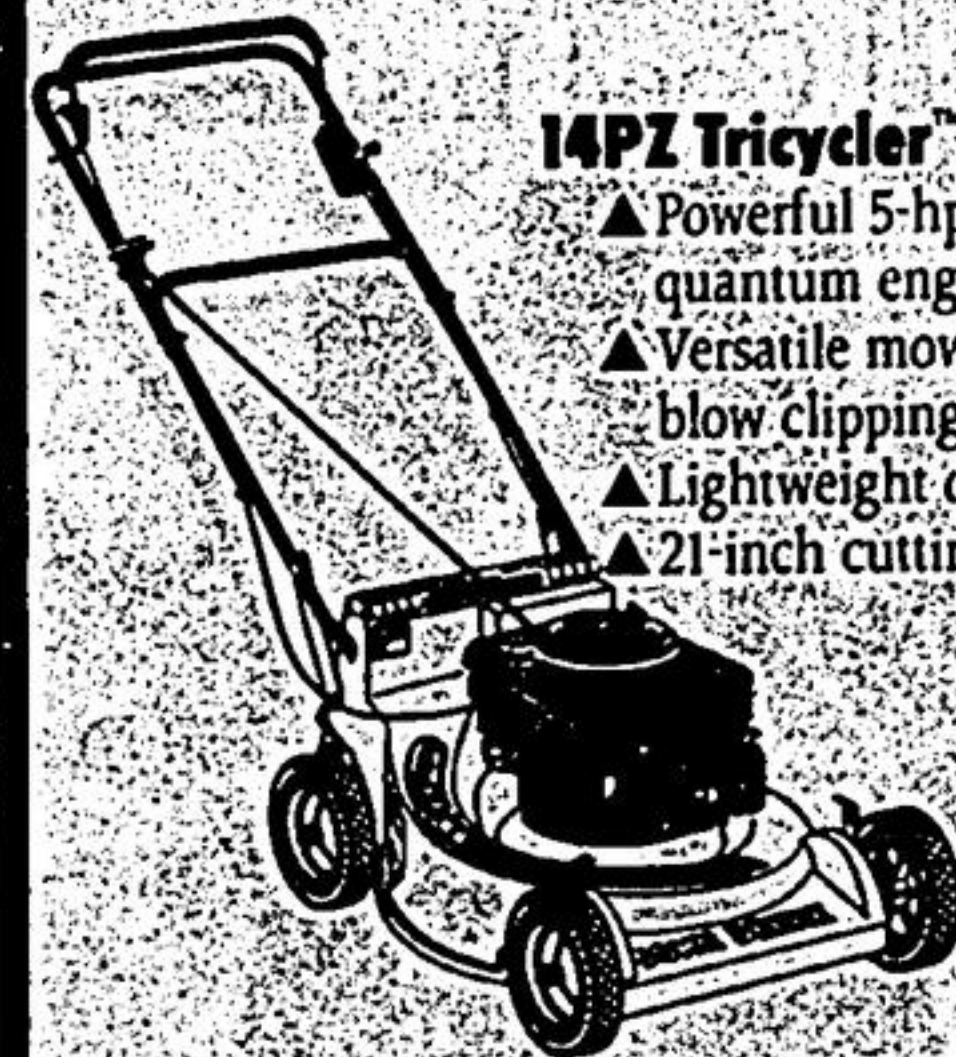
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