

LAWN & GARDEN

Natural insect repellants

Whatever you do in, and to, your garden has an enormous, direct impact on your environment. So take a minute, before you go crazy in the local garden centre looking for instant ammunition to off those pesky critters chewing up your precious plants. Carefully read all the labels on the pesticide, fungicide and herbicide labels. There are some commercial brands which are 'environmentally friendly', like Safer's, to mention just one. If you don't understand the chemical contents, have them explained to you - they may be highly toxic. We have no data at all on the likely toxicology of 38% of the pesticides currently in use in Canada. We have no data to assess only one-tenth of them, and several are likely cancer-causing agents. This is an overwhelming bombardment for the estimated 0.1% of insects in the garden which can genuinely be called 'pests', like using a nuclear missile when a water-pistol will do. Why not try, first, some home-made remedies for what ails your garden?

Before we get to targeted recipes, this is an all-purpose insect repellant:

- 1 onion
- 1 bulb of garlic (not a clove)
- 15 ml. cayenne pepper
- 15 ml. liquid pure soap (not detergent)

Grind up first three ingredients in food-chopper and mix with 1 litre of

water. Leave it for about an hour then add the soap. Strain and spray to keep pests away. This mixture, sprayed over your lawn and shrubs will also keep dogs at bay.

A modified version of the above can be used for mildew, leaf spot, rust, spore diseases and insects: 3 cloves of garlic, 1 medium onion and 5 ml. cayenne steeped in 1 litre of water for about half an hour, then strained. It can then be diluted with water 1:4.

Your destructive insects can be dealt with using 15 ml. of dried chrysanthemum flower heads in 2 litres of hot water.

Steep half a dozen cut-up rhubarb leaves in 3 litres of boiling water. Use when cool. This spray is highly toxic to humans, so keep it in a safe place.

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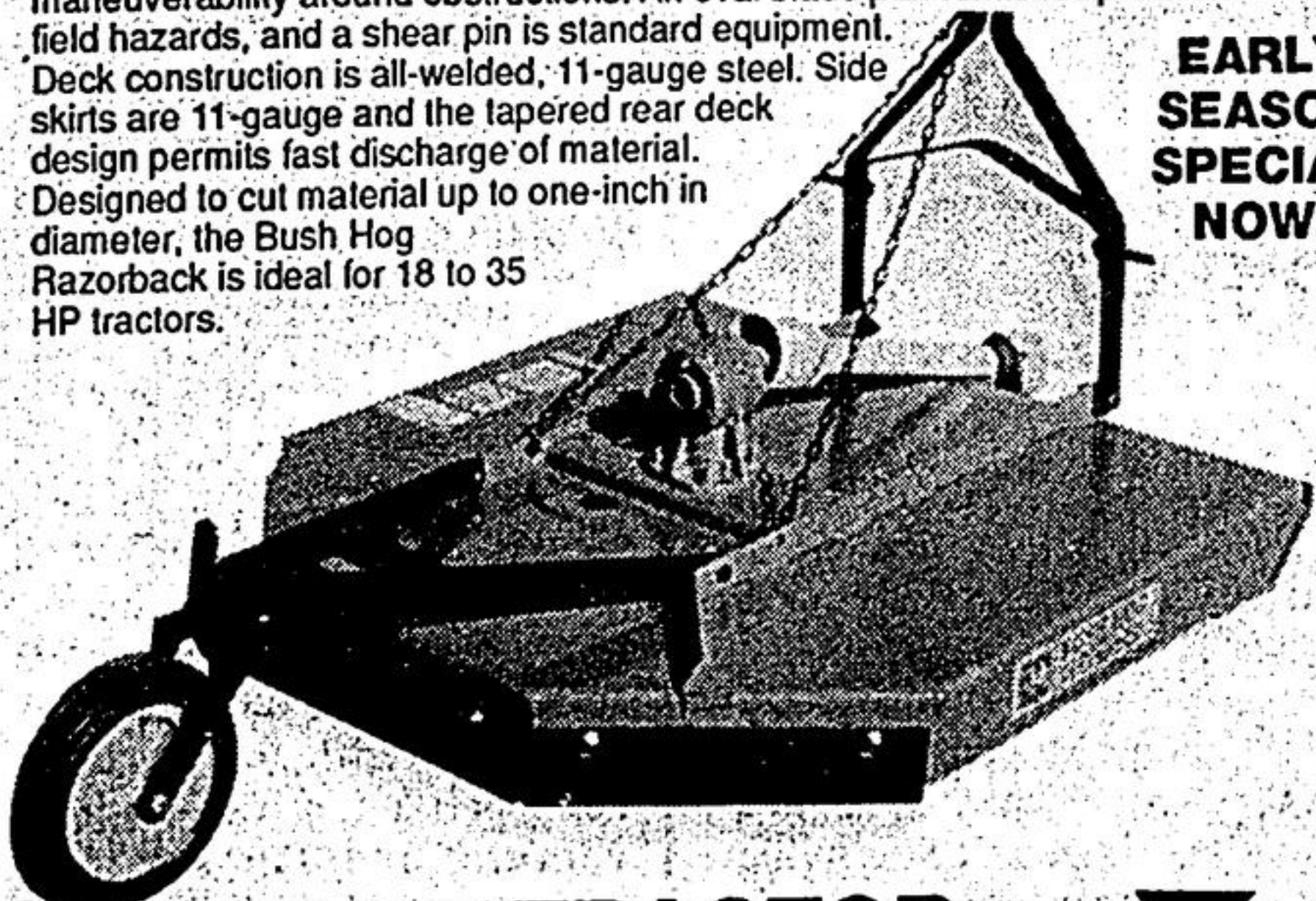
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