

PUBLIC SAFETY

Power Mower Injuries Up

► A POWER MOWER can cut grass but when handled carelessly can cut or injure the operator or a bystander, too.

A recent two-year study in Georgia on power mower accidents revealed that 737 occurred in that period. The number is constantly increasing.

Most of these accidents are caused by carelessness. The most common accident occurs as the operator attempts to start the machine, Dennis Orphan, associate editor, reports in *Today's Health* (June) published by the American Medical Association.

Operators ignore safety procedures by starting the machine with one or both feet under the back or side of the machine.

The second most common accident occurs when the operator mows on a hill or incline. He loses his footing and the machine rolls back over his feet.

A four-cycle engine, turning a 20-inch blade at 3,000 revolutions per minute, can pick up a nail or stone and hurl it at a speed of 170 miles per hour. A man in South Carolina died when a piece of wire thrown by a mower pierced his heart.

About 82% of the accidents were caused

by the gasoline rotary type mower. The machine is potentially more dangerous than the reel type because the blade whirls at a higher rate of speed, Mr. Orphan said.

Some of the rules he lists for safe operation of mowers include:

1. Clear the yard of all rocks, stones, nails, bones, wires, sticks, and other debris before you start.
2. Keep your feet in a safe position away from the blades when starting the mower.
3. Know how to stop the engine or disengage the clutch quickly in case of an emergency.
4. Never work on the machine while the motor is running.
5. Tip the mower by applying pressure on the handles. Never reach underneath and risk losing a finger.
6. Set the blades high when mowing on rough terrain to prevent debris from being ejected from the mower.
7. Do not let the mower pull you. Slow it down to maintain control.
8. Equip the electric mower with a ground wire.

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MEDICINE

Study Homosexual Pattern

► THE HOMOSEXUAL is the victim of his own emotional problems and environmental factors, not a victim of hormonal imbalance, alcoholism or genius.

Many of the beliefs about homosexuals, such as their marked tendency toward effeminacy or their intellectual superiority, were not supported by a recent study among 64 known male homosexuals imprisoned for illegal homosexual activities. The study revealed, however, that a history of neurotic behavior and psychiatric illness was frequently found among the homosexuals.

In addition, a background of alcoholic parents and broken homes seemed to be important, three doctors report in the *British Medical Journal* (June 7).

The homosexual prisoners were not more intelligent than average, but 55% of them were interested in art and culture. This is a higher percentage than would be expected from the normal population, the investigators say.

Touching on the development of homosexuality in individual cases, the doctors said that these factors were revealed:

Apart from those who were seduced at an early age, in about 40% the sex drive was homosexual from the beginning. Although this does not rule out the possibility that homosexuality originates in the mind, it does demonstrate that it is not necessarily a manifestation of vice. Perhaps it has some of the characteristics of instinctive behavior with which the individual has to contend or accept, whether he approves of it or not, the authors suggest.

The most common forms of homosexuality practiced by these men were sodomy and mutual masturbation. Furthermore, of 60 cases with valid data, 83% were promiscuous. The remaining 17% had selected partners. Several of those who were promiscuous said they would have preferred a stable association.

The reasons given for desiring a single partner were affection and greater safety from the police and venereal disease.

Twenty-four of the prisoners were married and had produced 43 children, Drs. R. E. Hemphill and A. Leitch of Bristol Mental Hospitals, Bristol, England, and Dr. J. R. Stuart, Garlands Hospital, Carlisle, England, report.

They stress that the continuous conflict between the masculine role demanded by our society and feminine urges appears as the reason for the effeminate manner found in a small proportion of homosexuals.

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ENTOMOLOGY

Cockroaches Make Migrations En Masse

► COCKROACHES migrate en masse, usually overcoming anything that stands in the way of their movement.

The mass migrations of cockroaches, which may play an important role in the transmission of disease, usually occur at night and are seldom seen.

Eyewitness reports of these "marches"

have been recorded, however, say Drs. Louis M. Roth and Edwin R. Willis, U. S. Army Quartermaster Corps scientists, in a report published by the Smithsonian Institution.

They cite these, for examples:

On a dark drizzly day in Washington, D. C., thousands of German cockroaches were observed to come from the rear of an old restaurant and march directly across a muddy street to the building on the opposite side. Several men with brooms were unable to stop the advance.

One night in New Haven, Conn., cockroaches from a "heavily infested" city dump swarmed on nearby houses as far as a city block away.

In Austin, Minn., a mass migration of the pest creatures was witnessed from a city dump to a new sewage-treatment plant a quarter mile way. The insects "completely overran the plant, even penetrating the electrical conduit system. Later, when certain electrical junction boxes were opened they were literally packed with dead roaches. The migration occurred just prior to the first snowfall, shortly after the city council decided to discontinue use of an open dump."

Why do the roaches mass migrate? In the case of the trek across the street in Washington, the scientists explain it resulted from the pressure of overpopulation.

Cockroach travels have been traced by using radioactive tagging, Drs. Roth and Willis point out. Large numbers of cockroaches have been captured, rendered radioactive, mixed with untreated populations and traced.

It has been conclusively demonstrated, the Army scientists said, that cockroaches do migrate from sewers into homes. The extent of migration probably is much greater than the recovery of the tagged insects would indicate.

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ENTOMOLOGY

Fly's Mating Habits May Lead to Its Death

► BECAUSE the female screwworm fly is a "one fly" female, mating once in her lifetime, U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists hope to be able to rid the southeastern part of the country of the pest.

The USDA and the Florida Livestock Board said that plans were being made to release millions of sterilized, laboratory-raised male flies over screwworm infested areas of Florida and southeastern Georgia. Females mated to these males do not reproduce. The eradication program will take more than one year and, so far, almost \$5,000,000 has been appropriated by the Federal Government and the Florida legislature.

Earlier studies in Florida and on the Caribbean island of Curacao have shown this method of pest control could be successfully used where danger of reinfestation is small. Florida's geography—most of the state is a peninsula—and the fact that the screwworm seldom spends the winter north of Gainesville, Fla., make possible eradication of the pest in the Southeast.

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