

MARCH 1977 75 CENTS

Popular Mechanics

EXCLUSIVE PM REPORT

ELECTRIC CARS
What owners
really think
about them



GARDENING

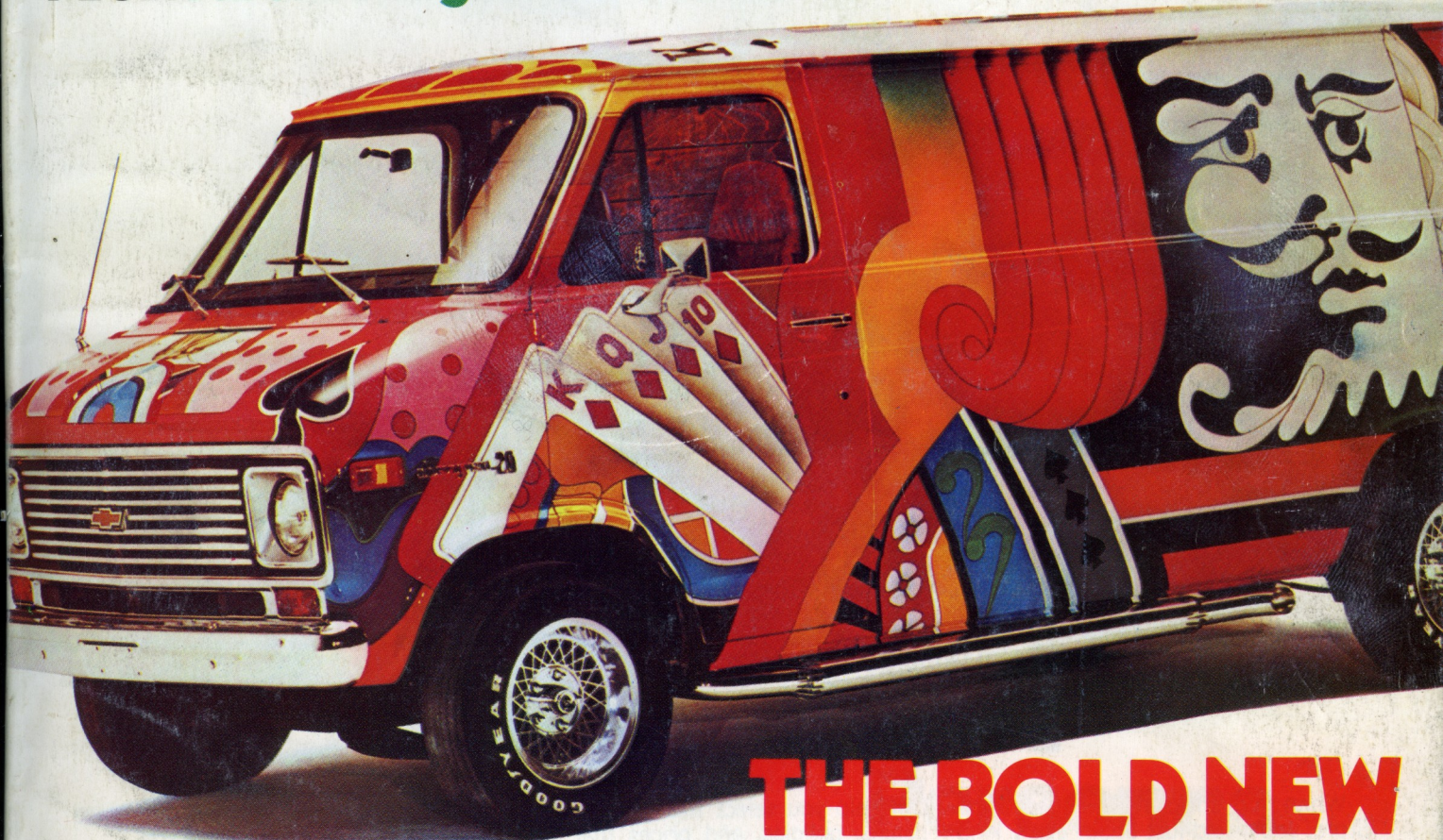
4 great projects

- ☐ Bicycle-wheel cart
- ☐ Compost box ☐ Bench
- ☐ Wheelbarrow

UNDERGROUND HOUSES:
Surprising comfort at lower cost

14 pocket cameras

PLUS: Surefire vegetable bonanza!



NIGHT DRIVING:
Your most dangerous
everyday driving test

ISAAC ASIMOV:
20 ways our world may end

**THE BOLD NEW
LOOK OF RVs**

**Announcing: PM's paint-job
photo contest**
☐ 24 rigs for off-roading
and camping



JOHN DEERE

There have been a few changes made to the Deere line of riding mowers for 1977. Most are minor modifications, such as repositioning the transmission control handle. On their rear grass bagger attachment, Deere has cut a plastic window so the operator can see how full the bag is.

Deere makes three riding mower models. The 66 is equipped with a 6-hp Tecumseh engine and a 30-inch single-bladed mower. It has a suggested retail price of \$825.

The model 68 with 30-inch single-bladed mower has a Briggs and Stratton 8-hp engine and a retail price of \$950. The Model 68 with 34-inch twin-bladed mower sells for \$995.

Deere is the only company I've come across that makes an electric riding mower. It has been on the market since 1975 and has a retail price of \$895.

The Model 96 is powered by 12-volt batteries which are charged by plugging the charger cord into an a.c. household outlet. It takes 12 hours to attain full charge—five hours to attain an 80-percent charge. Fully charged, the batteries run the mower for 1½ hours—about enough time to cut an acre.

The 96 electric riding mower has a four-speed transmission (three forward speeds and one reverse), cuts a 34-inch swath and is a quiet-running machine.

GRAVELY

This new design is a walk-behind power unit but with the hefty looks, power and capacity of a tractor-driven mower. Gravelly's 30-inch rotary mower attachment has redesigned fenders for faster discharging of grass and a front roller that prevents lawn scalping. The

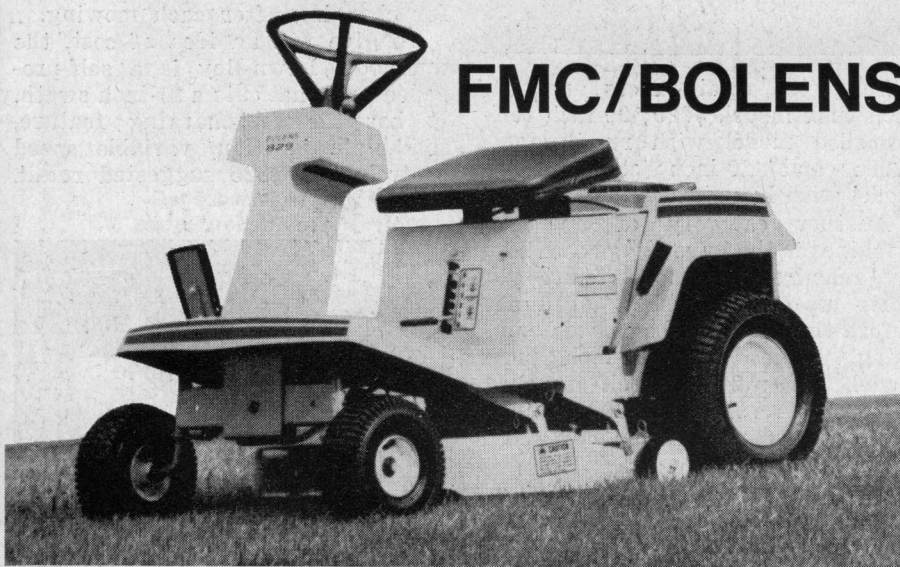
ARIENS

"While Ariens has not introduced new features with the 1977 riding mower line, there is a particular emphasis on the rear grass bagger attachment for all Emperor and 7-hp Fairway riding mowers," a company spokesman states.

The rear grass bagger has a plastic hopper which holds two stan-

dard 20-gallon garbage bags. It's mounted on a tubular frame attached to the rear of the mower. A polyethylene tube extends between the chute and hopper. Clippings drawn into the hopper are evenly distributed between the two garbage bags. Prices, not factory-established, may vary somewhat in different localities.

FMC/BOLENS



This company is emphasizing the fact that their mowers mulch the grass. Although this feature was introduced four years ago, it's still a noteworthy idea.

A multi-pitch rotary blade and a cutting chamber that creates suction lift clippings to allow cutting and recutting into a fine mulch which decomposes, adding nutrients to the soil. You won't find a discharge chute or grass bag on a FMC/Bolens mower.

Every one of the company's walk-

ing machines uses the mulching principle. This includes the 18-inch and 22-inch hand-propelled mowers (both with 3.5-hp engines), which have a retail price of \$165 and \$200, respectively. On the Model 22 we found the extra safety handle easy to use. If the mower gets away from you the handle is released and cuts off the engine.

The 828 rider has a recoil starter and is retail-priced at \$785. The 829 rider, which is the same machine with electric starting, is \$895.