

TELEVISION**Lawn And Order perfect relief from winter**

It shows how our front yards are extensions of our personality.

By Jane Sims
The London Free Press

I thought it was either compulsive behavior or simply the call of the green.

It's a Saturday summer ritual at my parents' home, when my dad mounts his small motorized green steed, revs the engines and begins hours of driving in circles.

What started as a tiny patch of grass when I was a kid, has grown into acres of green, just as soon he got a riding lawn mower and could roam all over his range.

But now, I've discovered that my father's obsession with grass cutting is not nearly as severe as I thought. In CBC's *Lawn And Order*, airing Monday, we meet John, who spends four hours a day — yes, a day — cutting, pruning, and edging his lawn.

"He has no life," his wife says in the quirky, funny documentary.

This is a National Film Board film by Janis Lundman and Adrienne Mitchell, who travelled across North America in search of good front lawn stories. The result is a lesson in our own culture.

You'll meet other strange people in this unique report, part of the network's *Witness* series, about how our front lawns are an extension of our personalities.

And this set of personalities consists of lawn junkies from environmentalists to the pink flamingo fanatics: A university professor, who studies people and their yards, is asked to name the nationality of people based on the lawn ornaments that guard their homes; Norman and his feuding neigh-



Michael Dean of Toronto poses on his front lawn in a scene from *Lawn And Order*, a documentary about North Americans' obsession with their front yards which airs on CBC-TV's *Witness* series Monday.

bor talk about his obsession with spraying pesticides all over his little patch of paradise to give Mother Nature a hand; and a cowboy lawn sprayer dyes a dead lawn a lush green during a Phoenix heat wave.

Then there's Harrison, a rock nut from way back, who has six-metre (20-foot) high piles of rocks all over his yard.

There's even a complete discussion on the nature of lawn ornaments, including a look at people who were part of roving gangs of gnome nabbers.

With their identities disguised, lawn ornament thieves or "cultural terrorists" as they call themselves, describe why they

stole gnomes, black-faced jockeys, cows, pink flamingos and any other decoration they deemed offensive.

On the other side of the fence are the people who love their lawn ornaments, and embrace them as symbols of themselves or reflections of reality, such as the woman who has sculpted a 300-pound nude woman from a body cast of herself and put it out on the porch where the letter carrier gingerly places her mail on the lap between two enormous breasts.

This is a fast-paced, enjoyable hour of landscaping madness, and perfect relief in a winter of cold and snow. It just makes you want to start scanning the seed catalogues ... or maybe tune up the lawn tractor.

IF YOU WATCH

WHAT: Comical documentary,

Lawn And Order

WHEN: Monday at 10 p.m.

WHERE: CBC-TV