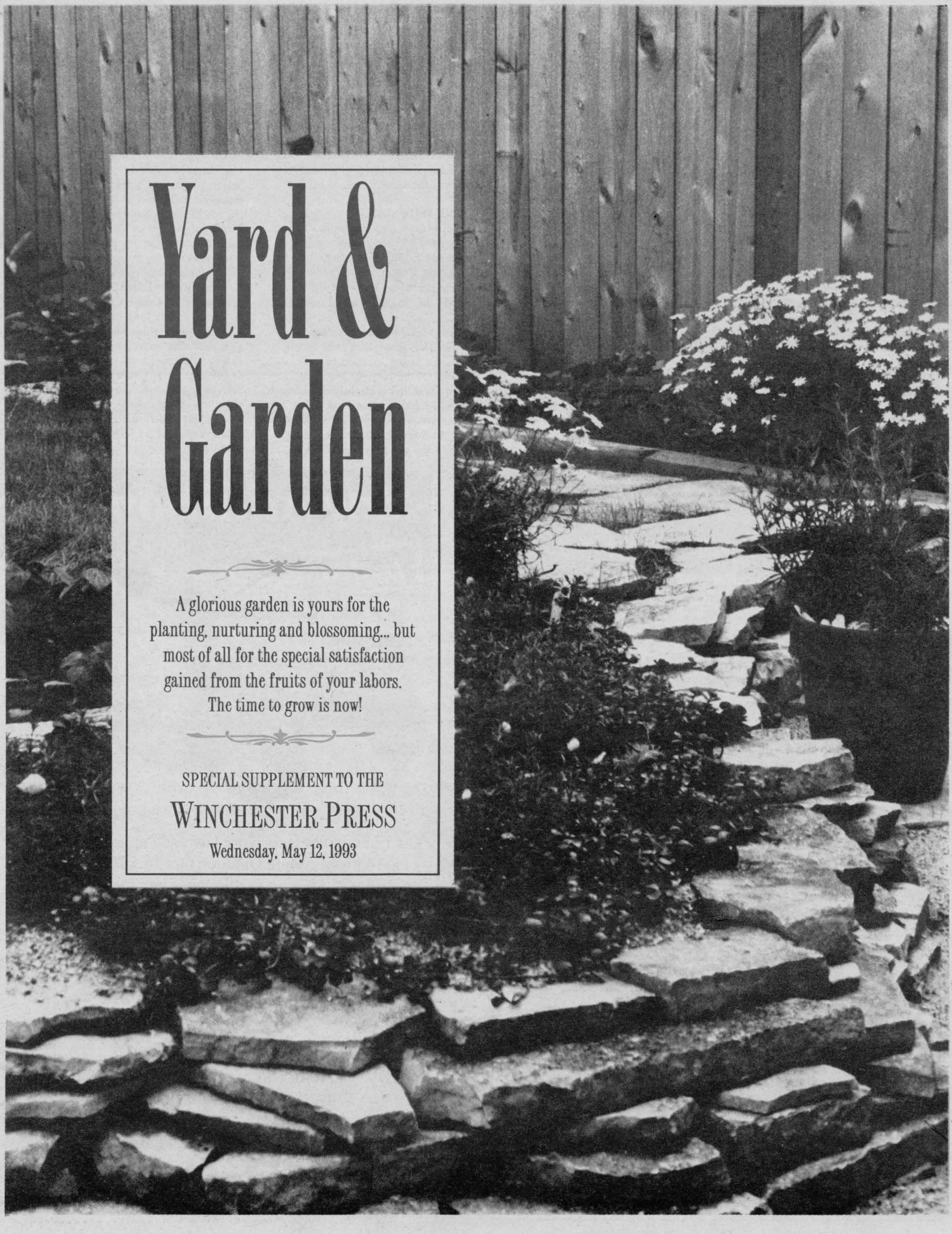

Yard & Garden

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE

WINCHESTER PRESS

Wednesday, May 12, 1993

Summer bulbs: a gardener's delight

TORONTO — Tender bulbs bloom in the summer in Canada. Whether you combine them in a garden border with perennials and shrubs or add them to your cutting garden, summer bulbs are a delight to the eye — and often the nose, too. Many of them are delightfully scented.

Freesia, for instance, produce a very pleasant perfume. Bearing small, trumpet-shaped clusters of flowers on arched stems, Freesia stand about a foot tall (30 cm). In our northern climate, they must be grown in cool conditions, such as an alpine house (i.e. an unheated greenhouse). However, they also grow well indoors and make great cut flowers, filling the house or office with their sweet scent for at least a week. Shades of yellow, gold, orange, pink, red, purple — freesia come in many colors.

Another fragrant summer-bloomer is *Acidanthera,* first cousin to the *Gladiolus*. Similar in appearance and culture to the *Gladiolus, Acidanthera* bear white flowers, with a chocolate (or reddish purple) throat.

Dahlias and *Gladiolus* are two of the better-known summer bulbs in Canadian gardens. Both are tall-growing — about one meter (three ft.) — and should be supported to keep them from blowing over in a rain storm or simply bending under the weight of their own flowers. There are vaious methods to brace long-stemmed flowers; for instance, put a stake — such as a bamboo cane — in the ground at the time the dahlia tuber or gladiolus corm is planted. Gently tie the flower stalk to the stake as it grows.

In the cutting garden where aesthetics may be less important or for dahlias whose dense foliage will hide them, there are plastic rings that attach to the stake. These are raised as the plant's height increases. Alternatively, large mesh netting stretched between sturdy posts, about 16 inches (40 cm) — higher for tall dahlias — will support a number of plants at the same time.

UNCOMMON BULBS

Adventurous gardeners indulge in many of the lesser-known summer-blooming varieties, such as *Anemone, Crocosmia, Ornithogalum* and *Ranunculus*. Tender *Anemones* include the single-flowered cultivar 'de Caen' and the double 'St. Brigid'.

Like their close relative the *Ranunculut, Anemones* need fertile soil and a sunny location in the garden. Of the two, *Ranunculus* require soil that is slightly more moist and will tolerate some light shade.

Anemones rhizomes do not keep well but *Ranunculus* corms may be lifted in the autumn, stored in a frost-free spot (such as the basement or root cellar) and replanted in the ground again next year.

Crocosmia, also called *Montbretia,* blooms in late summer, bearing yellow, orange or scarlet flowers on stems 24 to 32 in. (60 to 80 cm tall) — superb in home-made bouquets. Throughout most of Canada, dig and store the corms in dry peat moss or other material for the winter.

Ornithogalum thyrsoides, commonly called Star of Bethlehem, also by the nickname Chincherinchee. A tremendously long-lasting cut flower — up to three weeks in the vase — it produces enormous clusters of little white flowers on stalks about 16 in (40 cm) long. Unfortunately, its foliage is not attractive at blossoming time; so, interplant the Chincherinchee among low-growing companions, such as *Geranium* or *Alchemilla* (Lady's Mantle).



Delightful fragrance is a characteristic of many summer-flowering bulbs, such as Acidanthera bicolor, *a first cousin to the well-known* Gladiolus.

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Gardens save money, provide good exercise

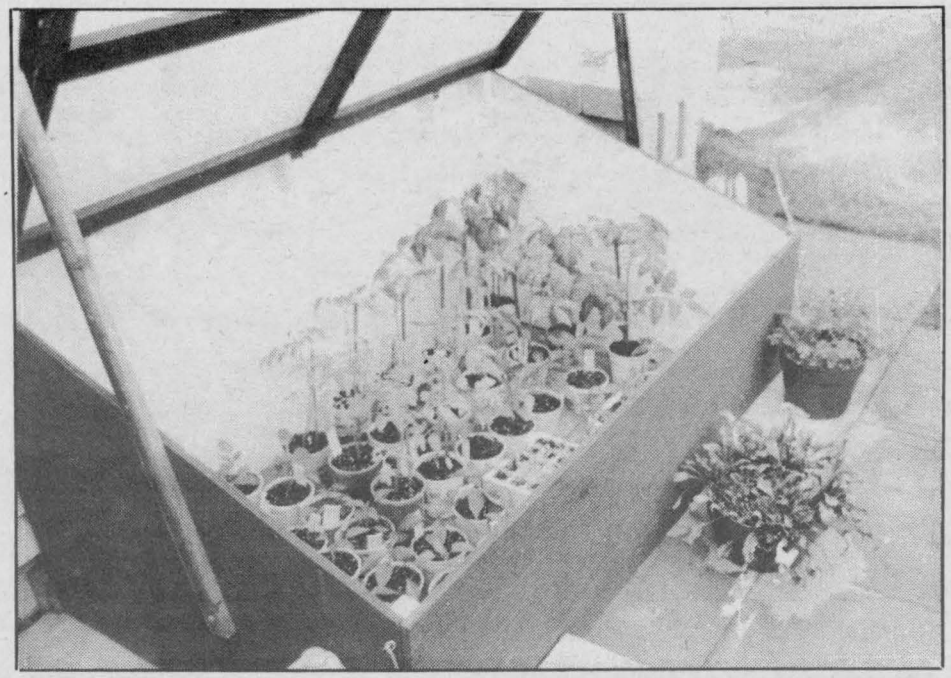
(NU)—When times are tough, many families start to cut down on leisure activities. Instead of going out to the movies or for a bite to eat, numerous Canadians choose inexpensive activities they can do at home.

One such activity—gardening—can help save a little money and take a step toward improving the environment at the same time. And planting a garden offers other benefits. It can provide good physical exercise and save money on the family food bill. Gardening also is one activity in which the whole family can participate.

With a little planning and care—and a small investment—a garden can provide months of enjoyment.

Having a successful garden does not require extensive knowledge—or a green thumb. Here are some simple tips beginning gardeners need to follow:

- Take photos of your lawn and house and bring them to the nursery. They will help determine what types of greenery will look good and grow best in your yard.
- Use composts, mulches and organic fertilizers to help soil stay healthy. Good soil is essential to the growth of any plant because it holds vegetation in place while retaining moisture and nutrients for the plant to use.
- Prune plants by removing dead stems and leaves. It is important to the development and maintenance of your garden. By cutting away diseased areas and thinning out sections to permit more sunlight, flowers will continue to blossom and provide plenty of opportunities for photos.
- Add to the look of the garden by using a trellis or night lighting. Stone statues and strategically placed benches will add to the design of your yard.
- Keep records of all your horticultural successes and failures. If a particular plant blooms well in your garden, snap an instant photo of it and keep it in a journal for future reference. If a flower doesn't grow, keeping a photo of it will help keep you from repeating the mistake.



Spring up

Seedlings wait, ready for transplanting in a garden or window box. Garden experts recommend waiting until May 24 for most plants.

Fresh spuds

Warmth begins to seep into the soil and it's a great time to start potato planting.

When choosing a location for planting, the only concern is avoiding soils with high lime content. Ideally, you should also have done some soil preparation last fall by digging and working in organic compost.

If you haven't started preparation, you should concentrate on turning over the first few inches before adding the compost.

Choose seed potatoes that are guaranteed disease-free and start early varieties by allowing them to sprout in trays stored in cool, light and frost-free conditions.

After sprouting, plant the tubers four to five inches deep and a foot apart. Be sure to place the rows about two feet apart.

Once planted, protect the tubers from frost by building up straw around the young shoots. This also protects the growing plants from weeds.

Start harvesting the tubers as soon as they are big enough to eat. Once dried for a few hours and carefully stored, they will last a long time.

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A bench is an inviting place to sit in the sunshine. Adding garden lights extends the day into night. *Press Staff Photo*

Use hedges as fencing

If you could erect a hedge as quickly as a fence, then there would probably be little call for the latter.

A well-groomed hedge can be a real feature in the garden and much easier to maintain—apart from the occasional clipping, you can leave them to their own devices.

Unfortunately, they can take a long time to establish and there seems to be a king of "sod's law" for gardeners that says the nicer the variety, the harder it is to grow.

However, if you are fed up with rebuilding the panels after a strong wind or digging out rotten fence posts, the idea of a hedge may be appealing, either as a boundary or a garden feature.

And now is the time to start. Apart from latitude, you also need to consider site, soil, cost and how much clipping and care is required for your chosen hedge variety.

If the hedge is also going to be a boundary, you may be particularly keen to have something tall and sturdy, or even one which is prickly enough to deter intruders or keep animals on or off your land.

Prepare the site carefully—it's for life—and allow at least two feet of growing space within your boundary.

Double-dig the site and add plenty of well-rotted organic compost to ensure a strong and long-lived hedge.

Conifers are by far the most popular type because they are not only handsome but also fast growing, particularly in the case of the sturdy hybrid Leyland Cypress.

Unfortunately, while they are soaring skywards, they do not put down strong roots so they will need staking for the first two years.

The Yew is more traditional and takes longer to establish. It is a handsome variety when grown as a tall hedge. You could also consider the following varieties:

Box—Slow growing and makes an excellent low hedge. Great for trimming geometric gardens and borders, but it is expensive.

Holly—Attractive and good at keeping intruding animals at bay. It is also slow-growing and expensive.

Beech—Not the most inexpensive choice, but it is beautiful and can be trimmed to keep its leaves through the winter months.

Honeysuckle—Certain varieties make cheap, medium-height hedges and give off a lovely scent.

Privet—Very inexpensive and fast growing. However, it takes regular clipping to be kept neat and tidy.

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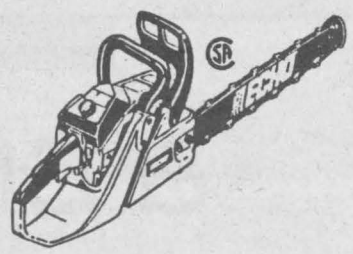

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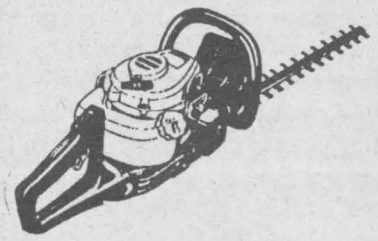

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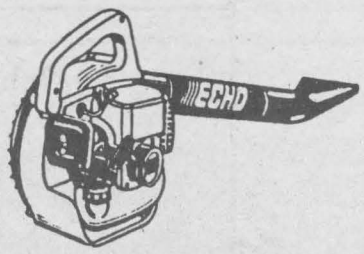

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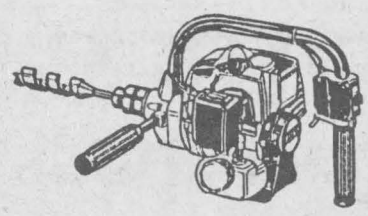

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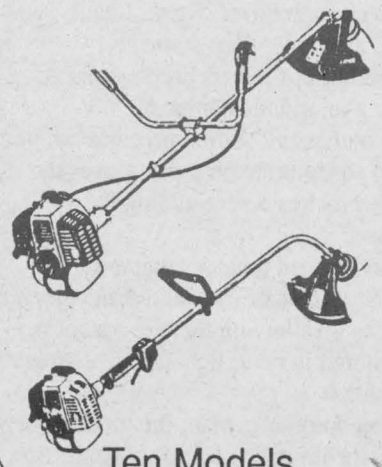

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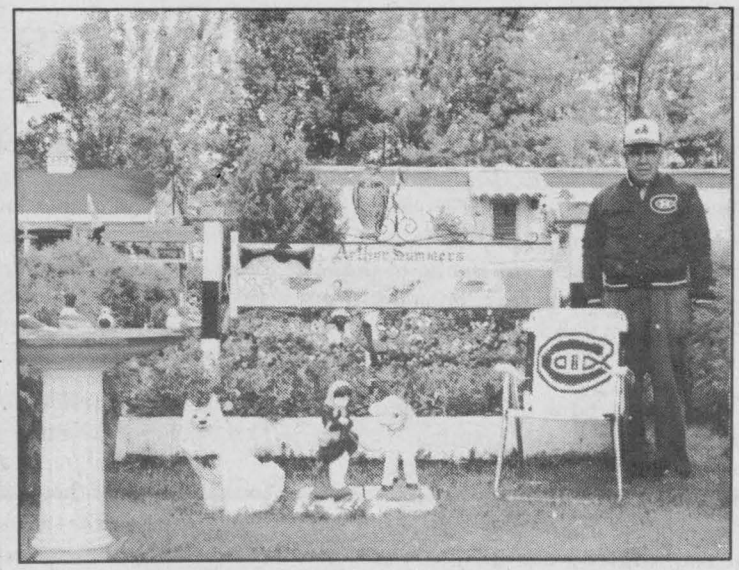

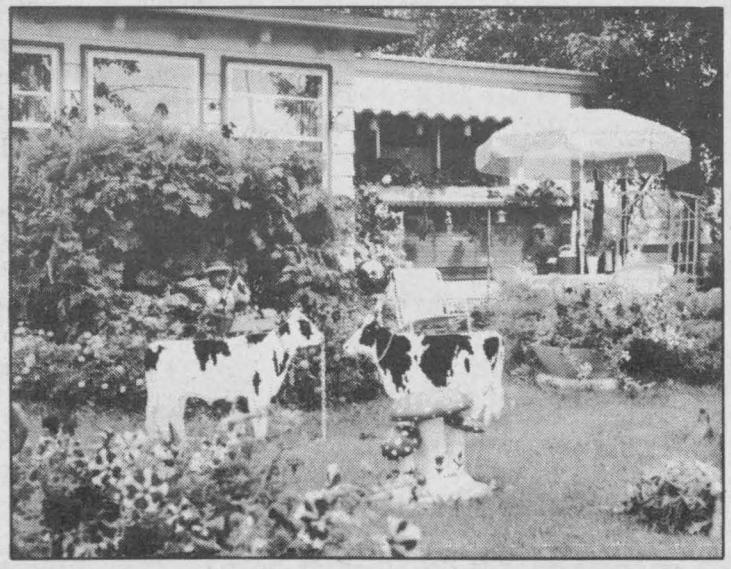

Summers' floral beauty

Many local gardeners put a lot of energy into their personal plots but Arthur Summers has gained a reputation for going that extra mile. The Maple Ridge man has been written up in the Citizen, the Globe and Mail and of course the Press for his wonderous collection of flora and fauna. A retired farmer, the 82-year-old Summers has converted his parcel of land into a veritable Garden of Eden as you can see from these pictures. Besides gardening, Summers is an avid hockey fan and in his younger days skated for Winchester Town League.

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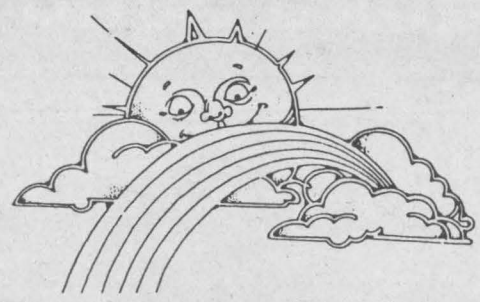

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Bulbs beautify balconies, patios

TORONTO — Some bulbs make great houseplants, *Crinum, Nerine, Vallota, Gloriosa, Haemanthus, Hymenocallis* and *Zantedeschia* grow best in pots. In fact, many of the more exotic of the tender, summer-flowing bulbs perform beautifully in window boxes and other containers.

Generally, none of them require much water just after planting. Increase watering when the first growth appears; also, while it's blooming, add fertilizer every two weeks. Reduce watering after the flowers have faded. This is the period when the bulb is resting and recuperating. Simply leave the plant in the pot until the foliage has died back. Then remove it from the container, gently remove any loose soil from the roots and plant it again in clean potting soil. The entire growth cycle will begin again.

Try growing *Crinum* this summer. It looks very much like Dutch Amamryllis, although the flower is more slender. Note the bulb's long neck, which sticks up above the soil line when potted. After the danger of frost has passed in the spring, the potted *Crinum* bulb may be set outdoors in a sunny spot. It will bloom in mid to late summer with long-stemmed, pendulous pink flowers on as many as 10 stems at once, about 32 in. (80 cm) tall. *Crinum* is dormant during the winter; during that time, cease watering and store in a frost-free location.

The *Nerine* and *Vallota* also belong to the *Amaryllis* family; of the two, the latter shows the greatest resemblance to that group of flowers. Plant them as soon as you get them in the spring, with the nose of the bulb just breaking the ground.

Place them in a warm spot early in the season and do not water until the first shoots become visible. Continue to water and fertilize as directed for *Crinum* (above). Pink Nerines are the most widely available. *Vallota,* also called *Cryanthus purpureus,* range from orange to scarlet and bloom best when pot bound.

Gloriosa, the glory lily, is a climbing plant with thick, fleshy rhizomes out of which grow long stems with pointed leaves and climbing tendrils. The best known cultivar has yellow-edged, red flowers. However, there are varieties with orange and yellow blossoms and others that are pure yellow. The common name reflects the fact that the blossoms bear some resemblance to a true lily, although they have smooth, erect or upwardly pointed petals with wavy edges.

The spidery blossoms of *Haemanthus* (the Blood Lily) and *Hymenocallis* (also called *Ismene calathina)* are an exotic sight. The former bears a spherical flower of rose, salmon, fire engine red or white, on stems from 20 to 60 cm (one to two ft.) tall. *Hymenocallis,* or *Ismene,* resembles a large *Nerine.* However, the white or yellow blossoms are fragrant and even larger.

Last but not least, there's *Zantedeschia,* commonly called the Calla lily. Almost too perfect to be true, this sheath-like flower stands approximately one metre (three ft.) tall, although smaller hybrids are available. Calla have been a popular subject for artists through the ages and were often featured in Art Deco motifs earlier this century. They bloom in many colors, such as white, yellow, pink, purple, bronze, gold, red, rose and bicolors.

TIPS FROM A VICTORY GARDEN

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Water works

Victor and Joyce Haire of South Mountain, with one of their family pets, kneel by their two-tiered water garden. The Haires also have a man-made duck pond and are planning a third water garden at the other side of the house. A contractor installed the two-tiered model last summer. When in operation a steady stream of water bubbles from the top pond into the bottom.

Press Photo — Edwards

Water gardens hottest new trend

Liz Edwards
Press Staff Reporter

SOUTH MOUNTAIN — Joyce and Victor Haire considered buying a home by the water when they retired.

But it was hard to find a combination of a nice home on a good waterfront. So instead they found their ideal house and brought the water there.

Days after they moved into their South Mountain area home, Joyce began making plans for a 150 foot by 60 foot duck pond in the land behind their home. Last year the Haires added a two- tiered water garden on a incline just outside their screened-in sunroom.

From the windows in the back of their home, they can observe the wildlife and birds that come to the pond. Just off the sunroom gurgling water, pushed by an electronic pump, flows from the upper 3-foot diameter pond into the smaller one below.

Ever since Joyce discovered water gardens she says she's been fascinated by them.

"It gives me great joy hearing the water. Our friends like it too. When they come in, it's hard to root them out of the sunroom. People are drawn to the spot here," she says.

"They're the hottest thing in gardening right now, that I know," she adds.

Water gardens are a recent sensation in the area. Alf Semenuk of Pioneer Nursery Limited says the store stocked kits and supplies for the pools three years but almost dropped the entire line because they didn't sell. Now he says they are selling fast.

"Actually it's been very popular in the States, Europe and Quebec for a number of years, Ontario's just starting to catch on," he says.

Water gardens can be as simple and small as a barrel with a few water lilies to as big as desired. Pioneer stocks both flexible liner and rigid biotextile liners for people who want to install the gardens themselves. Depending on what is done, a basic garden can cost as little as $40.

"We're going to make up some smaller gardens with a half barrel. You can keep them on a deck, they don't have to be in ground," says Semenuk.

Any aquatic plant can live in the gardens, marsh marigolds, water lilies, parypus grass are only a few. As well, goldfish make a colorful addition, though the fish have to be removed to a warm place before the pond freezes.

Around the pond, almost anything goes. Most people opt for some type of stonework, says Semenuk but there are a variety of plants and ornaments to complement the garden. Some water gardens like the Haire's have a rustic look — stonework, a cascading waterfall, driftwood and Japanese iris. Others may opt for fixtures such as fountains, bridges, underwater light, the possibilities are limitless, says Joyce.

"Some are very formal. I wanted rustic since I'm in a country setting," she explains.

In a few weeks, she plans to replace an herb garden at the other side of the home with a still water garden which she will stock with water lilies and fish.

Joyce admits she's hooked and is even eyeing another spot on their property where she can install another bog to bring birds in closer view to their home.

"I really find it exciting and rewarding," she says.



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Seeding versus sodding

"To seed or not to seed?"... that is the question!

A beautiful lawn doesn't happen by accident. It is the result of seeding or sodding, weeding, feeding, watering, cutting and proper disease and insect management. However, over the winter and during the growing season, grass plants may fall to the ravages of insects, disease, drought or winter damage. Damaged areas of grass may require patchwork or a total renovation, depending on the severity of the problem.

When a lawn is damaged, the gardener must determine whether to use seed or sod to repair it. Before deciding, there are many factors to consider. First, each lawn differs in its needs according to the variety of climate and site conditions. Is the lawn in full sun, in dappled shade or deep shade? Will it be lying over hills or slopes? Is it a contoured lawn? What are the existing varieties of grass? What previous lawn problems have been encountered? And finally, what is the sense of urgency?

The biggest benefit of sod is that it offers an instant solution to a problem. Sod is easier to establish than seed under the following conditions; on terraces or slopes where erosion is a problem; in areas where seeding is difficult due to heavy foot traffic; and in mid summer or late fall when conditions are unsuitable for seed establishment.

On the other hand, consider the disadvantages of using sod over seed. Sod is considerably more expensive. The soil which arrives with the sod may be incompatible with the present lawn soil. Sod arrives with an undesirable instant thatch layer and finally, any problems the sod grower may have encountered are now the gardener's problems.

Seed has many advantages over sod in that the gardener can use the exact seed variety and mix percentages for the existing climate and soil conditions present; e.g., under heavy shade, Creeping Red Fescue will do better than Kentucky Bluegrass. Seed varieties which are resistant to drought, disease and insects may be selected if the lawn has a history of certain problems. A recently seeded lawn will not require immediate aeration. Lastly, seed may be used for overseeding into a thin area to increase the lawn's thickness.

Grass seed must be chosen very carefully in order to guard against poor quality seed, seed with high percentages of weed seeds or poor seed viability. Once a correct seed mix is chosen, it must be sown at the proper rate to ensure a thick lawn.

Before you choose between sod or seed, weigh the pros and cons of each carefully — every lawn is different.



Starting plants early from seed can give gardeners a jump on the short growing season. *Press Staff Photo*

Ask the Dutch gardener

Question: We have a great many lilies planted among the perennials in our garden and would like to bring some indoors, as cut flowers. What is the best way to treat them for the longest-lasting display? — L.J.

Answer: Lilies do make great cut flowers and there is nothing nicer than a big bunch from your own garden.

To keep them fresh-looking as long as possible, allow the lilies to absorb plenty of clean water. Chop a small piece from the stem by making an oblique cut about 2 cm (1 in.) long. Remove the foliage from the lower portion of the stem, so that there will not be any leaves below the water line and add some cut flower food to the vase, about half the recommended dosage.

The pollen from the lily flowers leaves a strong stain. Whether on hands, clothing or furniture, do not try to wash it off. Instead, remove it briskly with a dry brush.

White, red, orange, yellow, pink, lilac — lilies come in a wide range of brilliant colors and subtle hues, as well as speckled patterns. Combine them with other summer flowers — such as dahlias and gladiolus — to make elegant and dramatic home-made bouquets.

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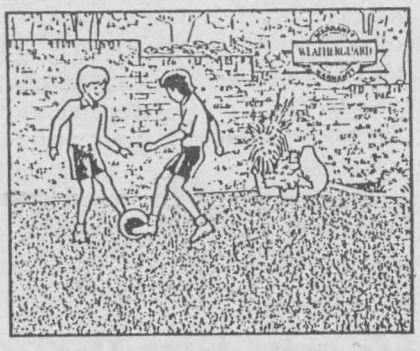
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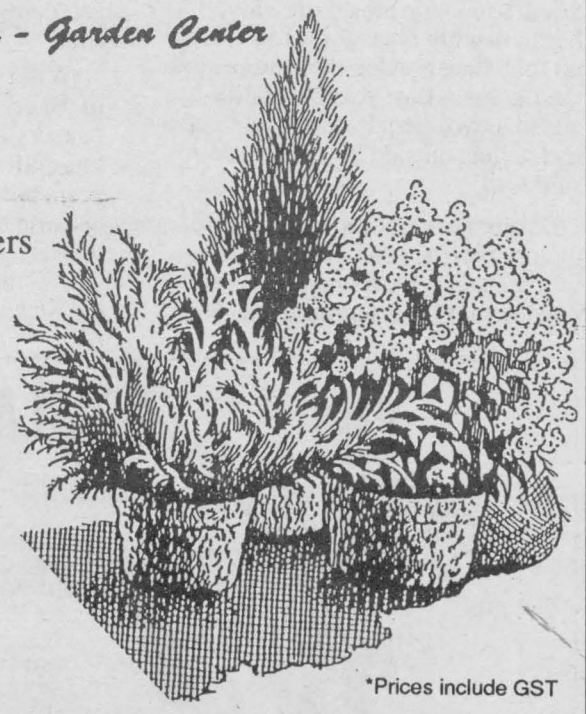
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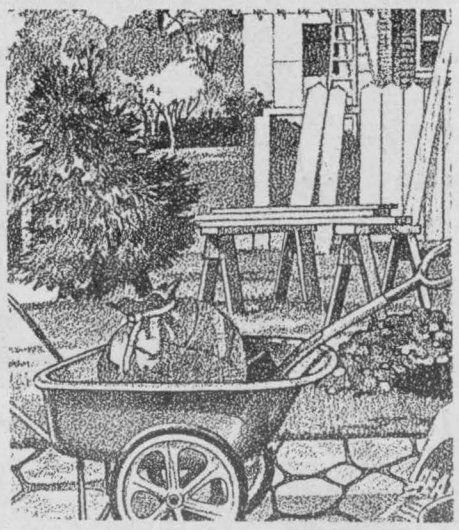
Evergreens are simple



Spring is a time of great change, and even if your garden is in transition, you can make some major changes yourself by planting evergreens.

During the '80s housing boom, the evergreens were a boon to canny housebuilders who wanted to attract buyers with "finished" gardens.

Evergreens are usually fast-growing and tolerant of poor soil conditions, so they are well suited to the gardens of new homes where the topsoil has probably been churned up and badly compacted by building work.

Evergreens are also useful if you want to spruce up an existing garden which has been left to its own devices for too long.

It's all very well feeling satisfied that you've cleared the weeds and tidied up, but then you need to do something with it.

Evergreens are ideal because they need little care and attention after being planted—and now is the best time to plant.

You won't find a shortage at the nurseries and garden centers, and most should have an explanatory note beside them, telling how tall they should grow and what conditions they like.

It should be quite a revelation to people who think evergreens only come with needles.

These trees actually have all kinds of foliage, and range from dwarf varieties and those ideal for hedging, right up to soaring types better suited to Siberia than your back garden.

Look for container-grown or ball-rooted trees, because these establish well. Reject any with browning or damaged foliage or disturbed roots.

Once chosen, take the tree home and water it thoroughly, keeping it moist if you are likely to delay planting.

Dig a hole big enough to take the root ball to within an inch below soil level, and allow it to be surrounded with a four-inch thick mix of topsoil and damp peat.

Here are a few varieties to consider for various tasks in the garden:

Leyland Cypress—one of the most popular. A hybrid created by man, it is fast-growing, tough, versatile and attractive—green and gold varieties are available.

It is popular standing alone as its tall conical shape looks good right down to ground level, but it is more commonly used for hedging because it grows fast and creates a dense foliage from low down.

But do make sure you trim such a hedge ruthlessly at least once a year, and try to keep it below seven feet tall or you will create a tough job for yourself next time.

When clipping, trim from a wide base low down to a narrower top to create a healthy and dense foliage at all heights.

Western Red Cedar—also produces an attractive dense hedge and will put up with shade and problem soils except low-lying or badly-drained ones.

Yew—a traditional favorite and very attractive, but the high cost of buying the stock is not helping those who would like to revive the once common Yew hedge.

No wonder that most cost-conscious gardeners opt for one or two as attractive specimen trees, especially since the Irish Yew family offers so many varieties.

False Cypress—a favorite evergreen largely because of its many compact varieties which fit so well into small gardens and other sites where space is at a premium.

Ellwood II—an excellent choice for tubs, and deserving greater popularity for its trick of "turning blue with the cold." During winter, the grey-green foliage turns a misty blue.



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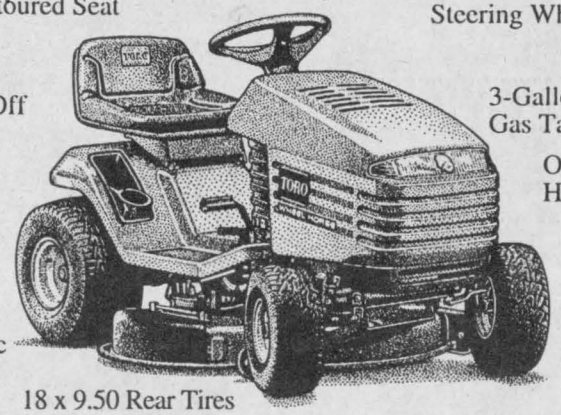

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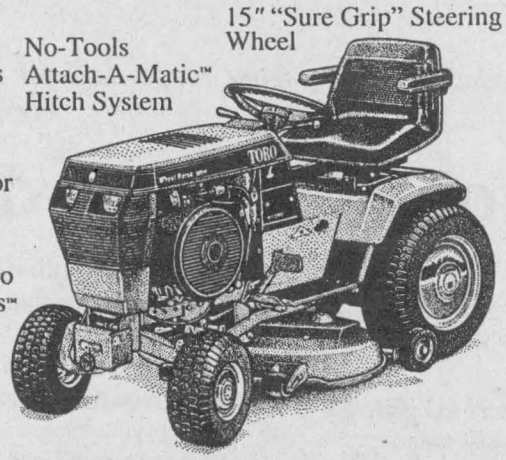

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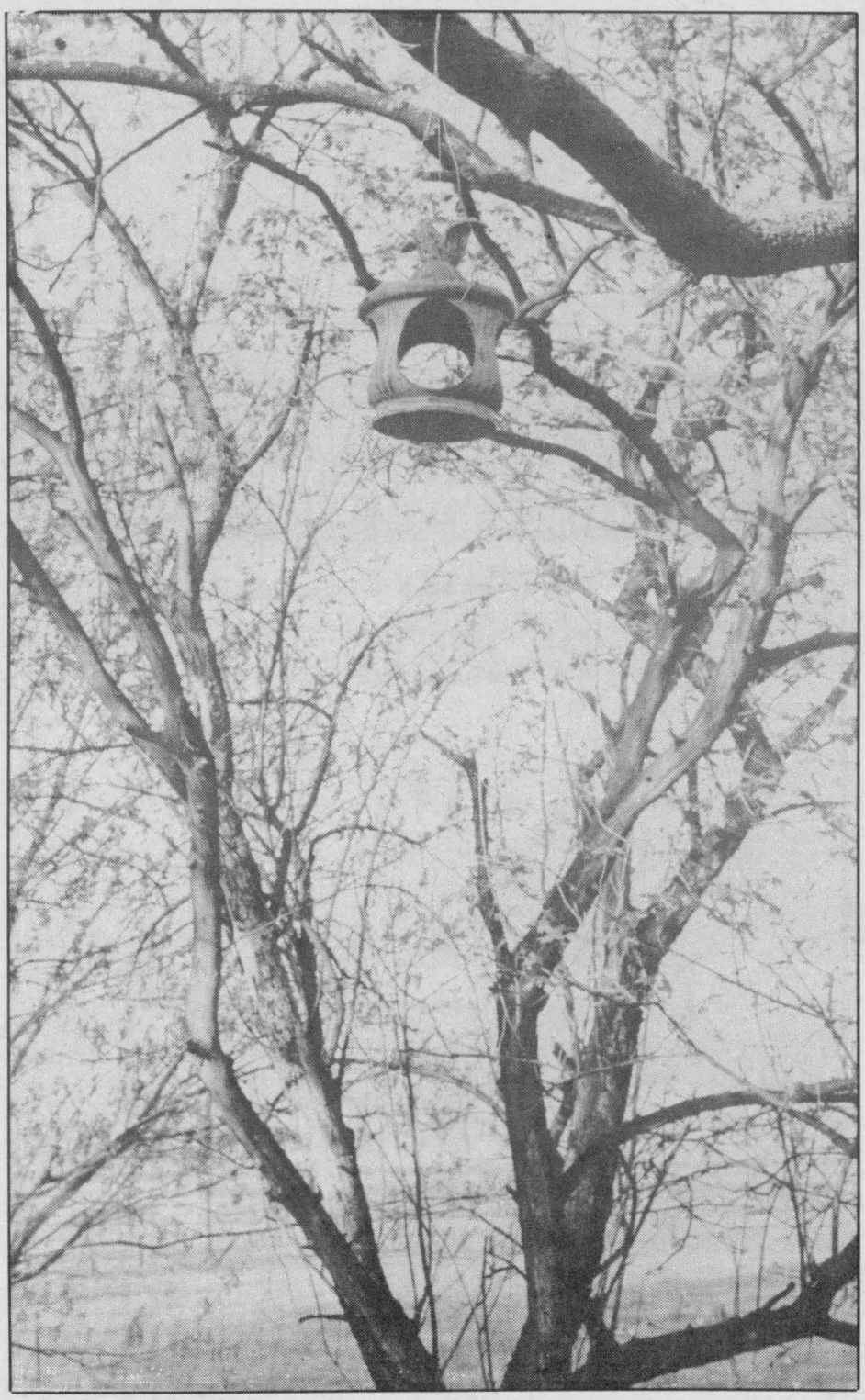


Sky feeder

A birdfeeder suspended well out of feline range waits for its first customers. *Press Staff Photo*

Build your own sun deck

Spring is the time when families want to get outside to enjoy the improving weather, but the grass and garden can still be damp.

Thoughts may then turn to building a patio—somewhere reliably sound underfoot and lending itself to decorative tubs, boxes and hanging baskets.

Most people extend out a paved area from the back of the house, but if sunshine is the main reason for building a patio, you need to work out the site more carefully. Ideally, the patio should face south or west to get the best of the sun's warmth and light. If not, then consider building it at the side of the house or even at the edge of the garden.

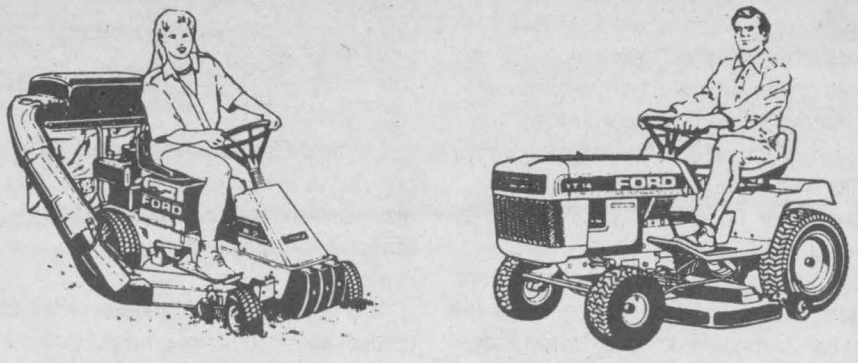
A "sun deck" away from the house could actually be a lot quieter as well and there's no need to feel cut off if the phone rings. Invest in a cordless phone to take with you while sunbathing. If you want to make the patio secluded by building trellises or fencing, you should also ensure that you don't block out sunshine as well as prying eyes.

Another point in finalizing plans is the view from your patio. Keep in mind any particular views you would like to see. You should also screen out any views you want to hide.

The choice of a patio floor is another matter to consider. Concrete will last longer, but slabs tend to look neater and more attractive. Both could be messy if placed too close to a leaf- or berry-shedding tree.

You do have the option to use the patio for entertaining and barbecues. This project is a great way to get back into the great outdoors earlier than usual.

SPRING SWEEP



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Great gardens: tips from our readers

"We love to garden. We started here four years ago with a new lot in Fox Fire Ridge. A local landscaper did the fancy front yard for us and we've worked on the back. We originally came from a 50-acre hobby farm at Edwards and so we brought lots of perennials with us when we moved. And friends gave us more. We exchange them, they're always the plants that you seem to enjoy the most. We have built rockeries with big rocks from our lot. And in the bush we've made paths, winding through, lined with rocks, with something interesting placed here and there along the way. There is lots of wildlife, rabbits, squirrels and birds. We also feed a lot of birds. We've found out that if you want to attract birds, you should put out ground-level water baths for them. You can use a clay saucer, or any shallow bowl.

We also have a pond surrounded by rocks; it had a fountain in it the first year. We planted ferns around it. We have lots of neighborhood kids and pets who come to visit."

—Peter & Barbara Kirk, Ormond, Ont.



Rockeries with perennials add color and interest to the bush lot in Ormond belonging to Peter and Barbara Kirk.

"I have a big garden, and have always been around gardening. Gardens have to vary according to your needs, and space available. And whether you want a flower garden or vegetable garden or both. Plus you must decide how much time and energy you have available to spend looking after it.

I like clematis very much. It needs lots of space - you need a trellis or wall for it.

You can cut down your garden labor by having more shrubs and trees. I think everybody has to work out their own particular likes and dislikes. I personally like a lot of rock in the garden."

—Isabelle Forward, Chesterville, Ont.

"To grow very early carrots, begin in the fall. Before freeze-up, prepare a bed. Work the soil up fine and make grooves in it for the rows of seed. Take a pail of soil inside the garage or basement to keep warm. After the ground freezes hard, place your carrot seed in the grooves and cover lightly with the warm soil. Next spring's carrots will be up and growing before the ground can be worked for any other crop."

—Del Zehr, South Mountain, Ont.

"I generally plant my vegetable garden around May 24, after danger of frost. I planted pansies yesterday, and my dahlias are going in this week - potatoes next week."

—Luella Cumming

"You should water your garden and flowers early in the morning and in the evening, when it is not too hot. Also, put out some beer in a jar to kill earwigs. And most important, WEED DAILY."

—Marion Coleman, Hallville, Ont.

"Another helpful hint for ladies who like to garden, but hate to dirty their fingernails: just scrape your nails across a bar of soap. The soap fills under the nails and washes out when the work is done."

—Peter & Barbara Kirk, Ormond, Ont.

"I screen my compost by placing a wire screen over my wheelbarrow. It makes it really nice. I have beautiful black loam.

Right now it's time to plant the shrubs. Spring has sprung. I've already aerated and thatched my lawn, and applied my pre-emergence crabgrass control.

Gardening is a flair with me. I worked on a farm and with a horticulturalist; that gave me a good background.

I looked after the Coca-Cola, Bally and Electrolux gardens on California Ave. in Brockville. I started my own gardening business at age 52 - and a thriving one! You must be ambitious, but you are governed by the weather. It's a back-breaking job.

I recently retired at age 76. Now I'm just enjoying my own garden the way other people get to. There's nothing nicer than outdoor activity."

—Muriel Laurie, Morrisburg, Ont.

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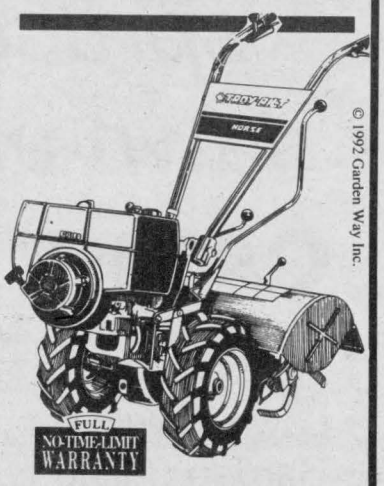

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Open swimming pool and it's party time

(NU)—Nothing signals the onset of summer like the opening of a pool. This time every year, millions of pool owners begin pulling back their covers, hosing off lawn furniture and sprucing up their backyards for another season of good ol' summertime living.

If you properly winterized your pool, there are only a few simple steps to take to get your pool in gear for swimming and enjoyment. If you don't, you may encounter some nasty problems when you pull back your cover. Don't panic. Today almost any pool problem can be solved with the proper care, thanks to major technological advances that have taken place in the pool and spa industry.

Pool care has come a long way in the past decade.

It used to be more of a trial-and-error venture, using different products that may or may not be compatible with each other or with your pool's unique 'personality.' Today there are highly trained pool care professionals who can use computerized water analysis to recommend a precise customized treatment plan for your pool's unique needs.

Here are a few simple steps to open your pool safely and easily:

- Remove your pool cover; clean it completely before storing it away for the season. This will prevent cracking and fading.
- Check to make sure your filter and pump are in good working order. Replace your filter or clean it with the appropriate cleaner.
- If you use a home water test kit, you will need to purchase new "reagents" at the start of each season in order to get proper readings.
- Fill your pool to the proper level and begin circulating. Add the appropriate chemical products to bring your water into balance immediately.

Start the pool season off right by ensuring that you have the proper safety equipment at your disposal. Every pool should also have a ring buoy with an attached line and/or a long handled hook within easy access. This is the type of equipment you won't want out of reach if the time comes to use it.

In addition, be sure to have a first aid kit handy which includes written instructions on CPR. Finally, check the security of gates and fences around your pool to ensure they're in good working order. This will keep children and unwelcome guests from using your pool unsupervised.

Once you've taken the proper care to open your pool, enjoy it in style.



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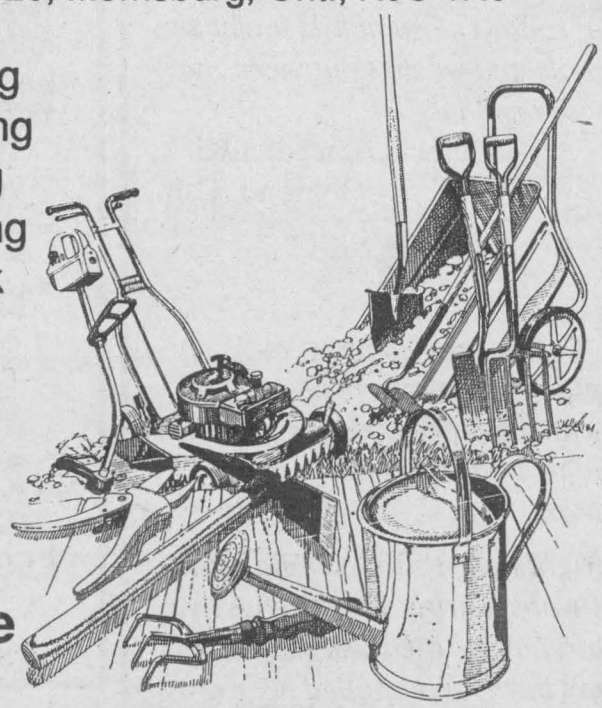

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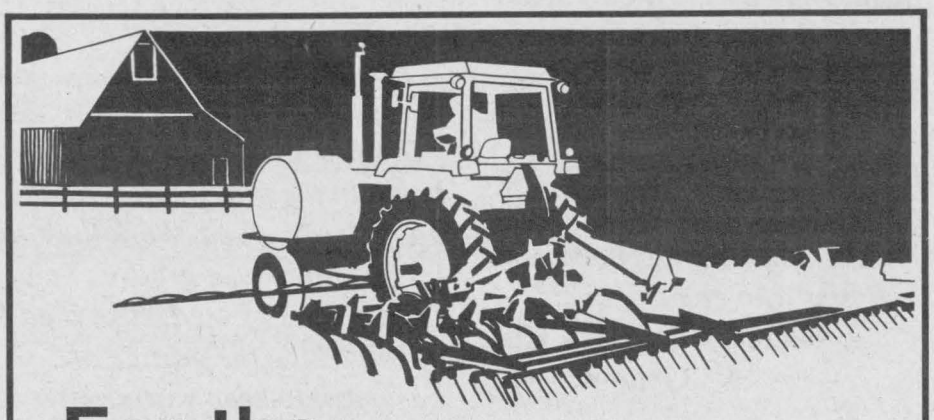

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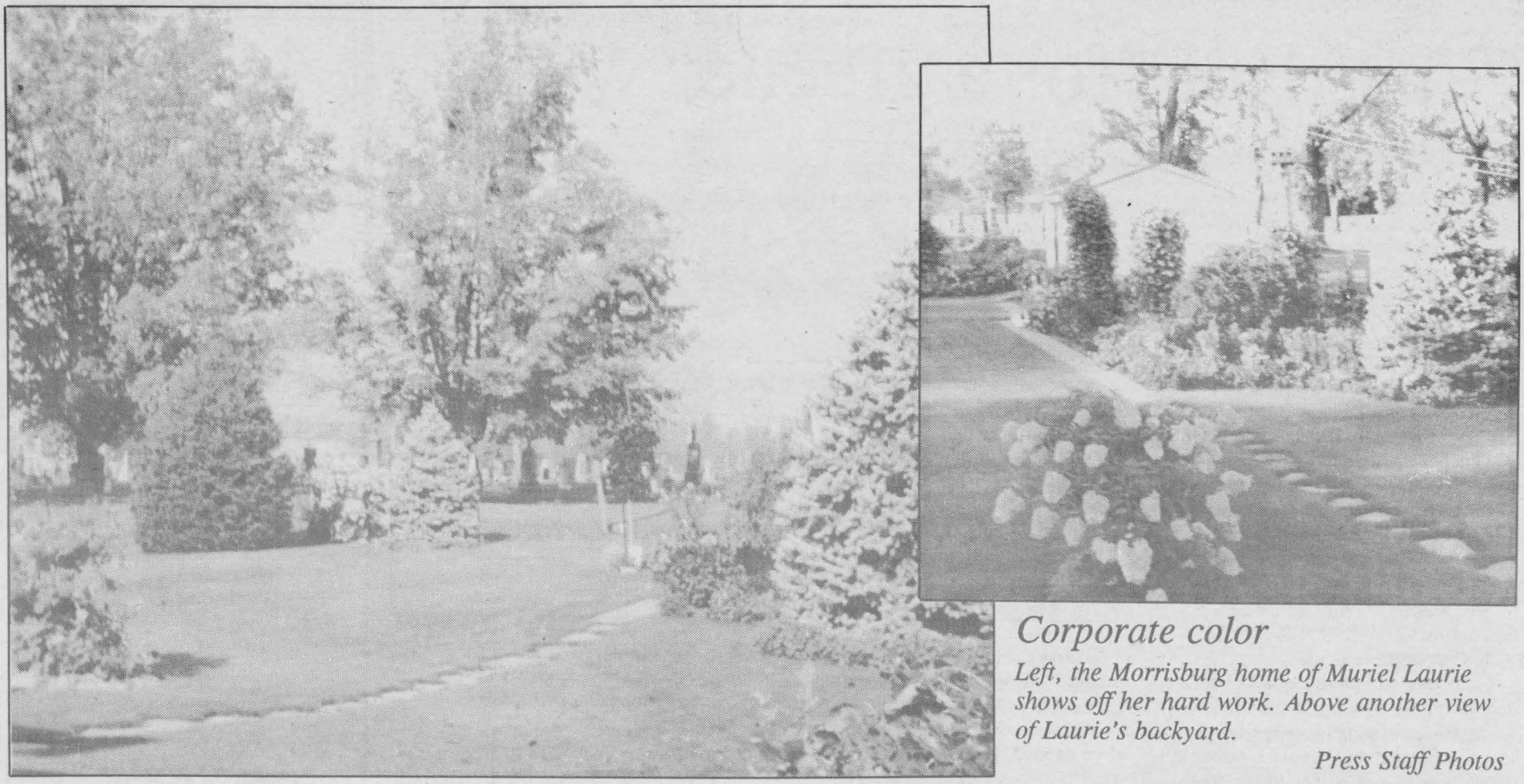


Corporate color

Left, the Morrisburg home of Muriel Laurie shows off her hard work. Above another view of Laurie's backyard.

Press Staff Photos

Corporate gardens beautify environment

by Michelle Valiquet
Press News Editor

MORRISBURG— On the surface Coca-Cola and Electrolux might not seem to have too much in common, but when Muriel Laurie was on the job, the two Brockville companies could boast about their beautiful gardens — a common denominator that was courtesy of her green thumb.

For nearly 15 years, Laurie worked for a variety of industrial companies along the Seaway Valley, turning drab plants and sterile office buildings into eye-pleasing silhouettes with fragrant, colorful gardens.

Although gardening has been a life-long passion since her girlhood in Niagara Falls, Laurie's start in the gardening business didn't occur until after the death of her husband. At the age of 52, she began her full-time gardening occupation which flourished until her retirement at 65 in 1977.

"People always said I had a flair for gardens and they were always coming over to see what I did with mine," says Laurie. "But I'm never really satisfied, I always think I can do it better."

Laurie was usually given free rein by the companies she worked for, to choose the colors, varieties and shapes as she so desired. "I did consult with the managers though, to tell them what I was doing and sometimes used the color schemes of the company...for Coca-Cola I used a lot of red and white, the company colors, in the beds."

"I could walk around the building and begin to visualize the gardens I would put in, almost immediately."

Laurie mixed shrubs, perennials, annuals and bulbs to achieve the effect she wanted. Her favorite plant was the blue morning glory. "I just loved the color."

Her constant enemy, she adds, was both Mother Nature and groundhogs.

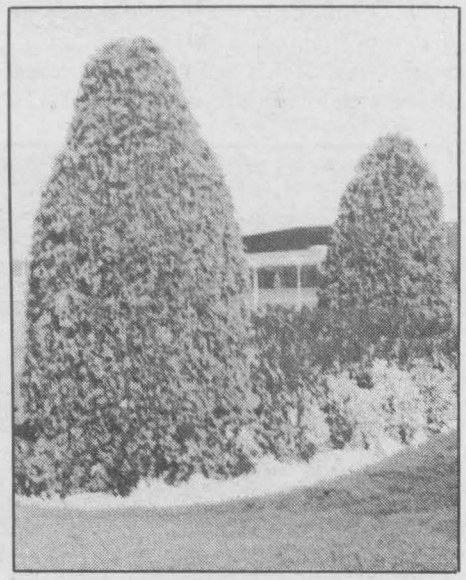
"You always had to contend with the weather," admits Laurie. "And the ground hogs were always burrowing into the beds, sometimes you had to smoke them out or use cages to get rid of them."

Day began very early for Laurie, who would rise at 2:30am, arriving for work in Brockville at 4:30am and working constantly until everything was done.

"You got tired, but it was a good type of tired," says Laurie. "Where else could I have been paid to exercise?"

In her off-season there was always keeping the company books, planning and ordering for the new season and housekeeping to be done, she says, and resting up for the next spring.

"You get out of a garden what you put into it — whether it's fertilizer or hard work — the garden gives it back in beautiful results."



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Grasscycle for a greener world

by the Dundas Environmental Awareness Group

MORRISBURG — People are beginning to hear the familiar hum that heralds once again the arrival of another lawnmowing season. So let's take time to delve into the realm of grasscycling. This unique method of lawn care not only benefits your lawn, but also cuts down on yard labor and the amount of curb-side waste.

It's a fact that leaving your clippings on the lawn instead of raking them saves time, reduces waste and helps improve your lawn's root system. Grass clippings are also high in nitrogen fertilizer. This better equips your greenery in the struggle against disease, drought and insects.

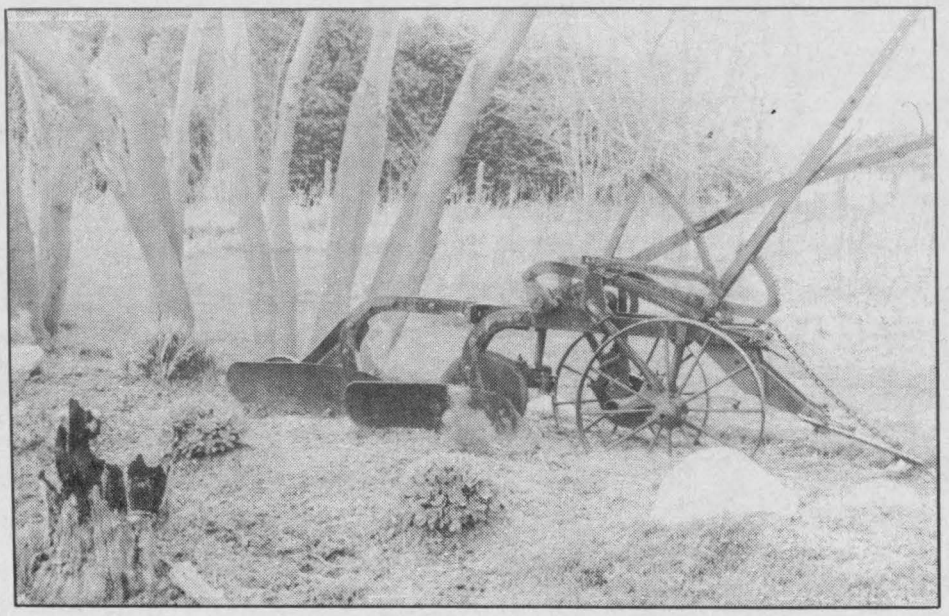
Still sceptical? Well let's shatter a few myths:

1. Grasscycling is messy.

Fact: Grass clippings quickly decay and disappear within a day or two.

2. Grass clippings damage lawns.

Fact: By mowing regularly at the proper height you will improve your lawn. If your grass is allowed to grow too long between cuttings, the thick patches of mowed clippings will suffocate those areas. The mower's blade should be set to leave the mowed grass approximately two inches (5cm) long. Grass at this length also provides shade which discourages weeds.



3. Grasscycling causes disease.

Fact: The spores that cause grass disease are present whether clippings are collected or not. By watering only when needed, (one inch of water every five to six days, in early morning) you will help your lawn resist diseases.

Of course as with all things, there are a few good rules of thumb to follow in order to ensure a beautiful lawn:

1. Don't cut more than one-third of the grass blade.

2. Cut regularly: if the grass is long, cut off short amounts in several mowings rather than all at once.

3. Use any kind of mower, but make sure it has a sharp blade.

4. Never mow during a drought.

5. Prevent excessive grass growth by watering and fertilizing in moderation.

Just remember by leaving your grass clippings on the lawn and your rake in the garage, you are helping your lawn and the environment.

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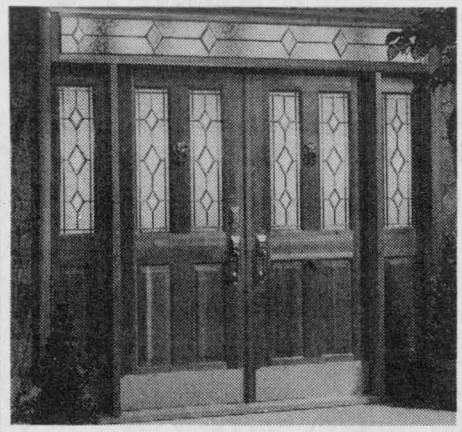



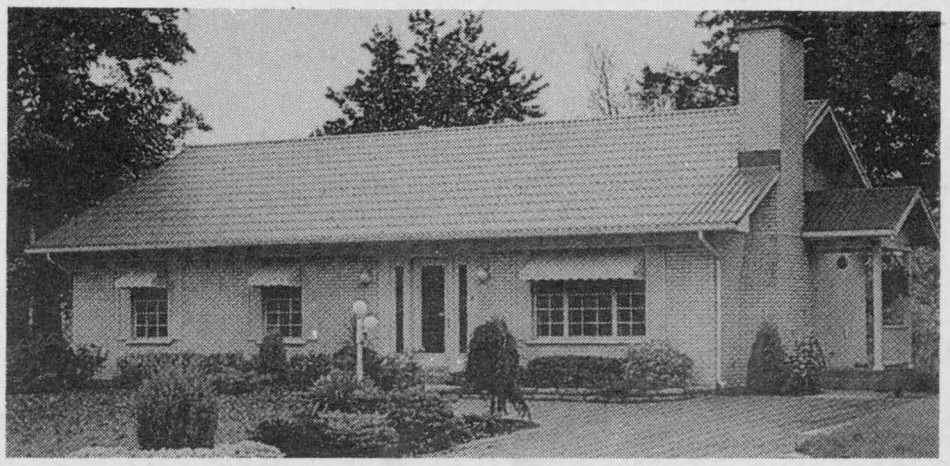



Lilies have graced summer gardens for centuries and have long been a symbol of royalty and religion.

Variety of lily choices for garden enthusiasts

Still-life paintings of flowers from the 17th century often show a massive profusion of blooms, in combinations that never could occur naturally. Today, thanks to the art and science of hybridization, flower production is beginning to rival the work of the Old Masters in extending the natural blooming season of many plants and flowers.

For instance, there is now an ample selection of lilies available for sale nearly year round. One may choose from among many, such as the familiar regal lily (Lilium regale) and The fragrant, species lily, L. auratum (or the gold banded lily, predominantly white and very fragrant). The trumpet lily (L. longiflorum) is best known as the Easter lily. However, it only blooms in the spring for that sacred holiday as a result of professional forcing techniques. Normally this variety blooms in the garden in mid-summer.

There are also multi-colored varieties, such as the sweet-smelling Oriental hybrids in shades of pink, such as Star Glazer, which is heavily spotted with red. Others of varied hues include the species lily — L. speciosum — with its sharply reflexed (i.e. backward arching) petals in rich shades of red, pink and white; orange-red speckled tiger lilies (L. tigrinum), and Asiatic hybrids in hues of white, pink, yellow, red and orange.

To make cut lilies last as long as possible, first let them soak up lots of water. Then cut off a bit of the stem and remove the lower leaves to prevent them from rotting in the vase water. Add a bit of cut flower food (not a lot) to keep the water clear and to assure a full period of bloom.

Some people find lilies most attractive in bouquet on their own. A vase filled with a few white or colored blossoms can be splendid; on the other hand, a single stem of lily blossoms in a tall, tapered vase or pitcher provides a setting in which this royal blossom can be displayed in all of its pure beauty. However, lilies also combine beautifully with the whole procession of colorful, summer flowers.

Either way, they make sturdy cut flowers with a royal allure. For all these reasons, let yourself be inspired by the fantasy of the 17th century artists and create a baroque profusion of the flowers this summer, with lilies as the unifying theme.

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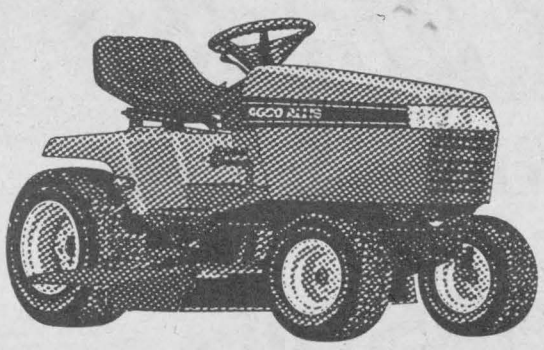

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Good veggie bedmates

More and more people are growing vegetables because they know that not only is the taste better when picked fresh from the garden, but home-grown vegetables are so much cheaper than shop-bought.

Being able to pick at the peak of tenderness and serve within an hour or two of picking is a revolution for the taste buds.

This spring as you begin planting, notice that the winter frosts will have produced a nice crumbly surface in your garden beds.

It's essential to sow when the soil is moist but NOT wet or waterlogged. It pays to buy top-quality seeds and plants. Sow seeds in drills and never forget the old well-proven saying: Don't sow too early, too deeply or too thickly.

Some folks might say that you shouldn't plant vegetables side by side because you won't get a good yield. Take that—as you would your vegetables—with a pinch of salt.

But one thing is certain: Some vegetables make better bedmates than others, and for what it's worth, here is a list of "compatible bedmates."

ASPARAGUS: basil, parsley, tomatoes.

BEANS: marigolds, celery, potatoes.

BEETS: carrots, onions, kohlrabi, cauliflower, kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, turnips, cabbage.

CARROTS: onions and parsley (which repel carrot flies), beets, peas, sage.

CORN: beans, cucumbers, lettuce, soybeans, spinach.

CUCUMBERS: corn, radishes.



LETTUCE: cabbage, onions, radishes.

NASTURTIUMS: potatoes.

ONIONS: carrots, lettuce, radishes.

PEAS: beans, carrots, corn, potatoes, turnips.

PEPPERS: carrots, eggplants, peas.

RADISHES: carrots, lettuce, spinach.

STRAWBERRIES: borage, lettuce, basil, nasturtiums.

TURNIPS: peas.



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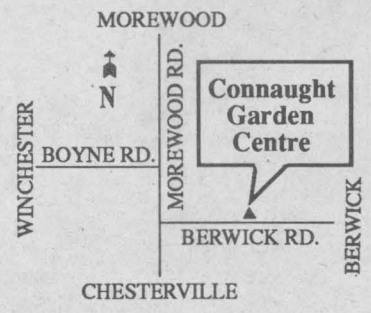

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Purchase perennials with future in mind

MORRISBURG— Whether your garden is a cramped backyard or a generous plot of land there are always places to use perennials for lasting color and character.

From lupin to phlox, delphinium to aster, perennials can add magnificent hues and shades to your garden, which will return year after year.

However, before rushing to the garden store to stock up on perennials, gardeners should consider where they are planning to locate their purchases.

Eileen Johnston of Applewood Farms in Mariatown says before buying perennials gardeners should consider what type of environment the plants will inhabit.

"There are perennials for every situation, but when you consider the type of soil, shade and the sun a plant will be receiving you narrow the choices down to certain varieties," says Johnston. "Is the soil clay-like and heavy? Are the plants going to get sun from the south or north? Will the shade be dense or light? These elements narrow the range of plants to consider for a particular location."

Johnston says gardeners should give some thought to the type of presentation they are trying to achieve with the flowers.

"Some people want a very formal appearance to their garden, but others are attracted to an informal, English garden type of arrangement," says Johnston. "Usually I can help people decide by examining pictures so they can say 'yes, that's what I want it to look like.'"

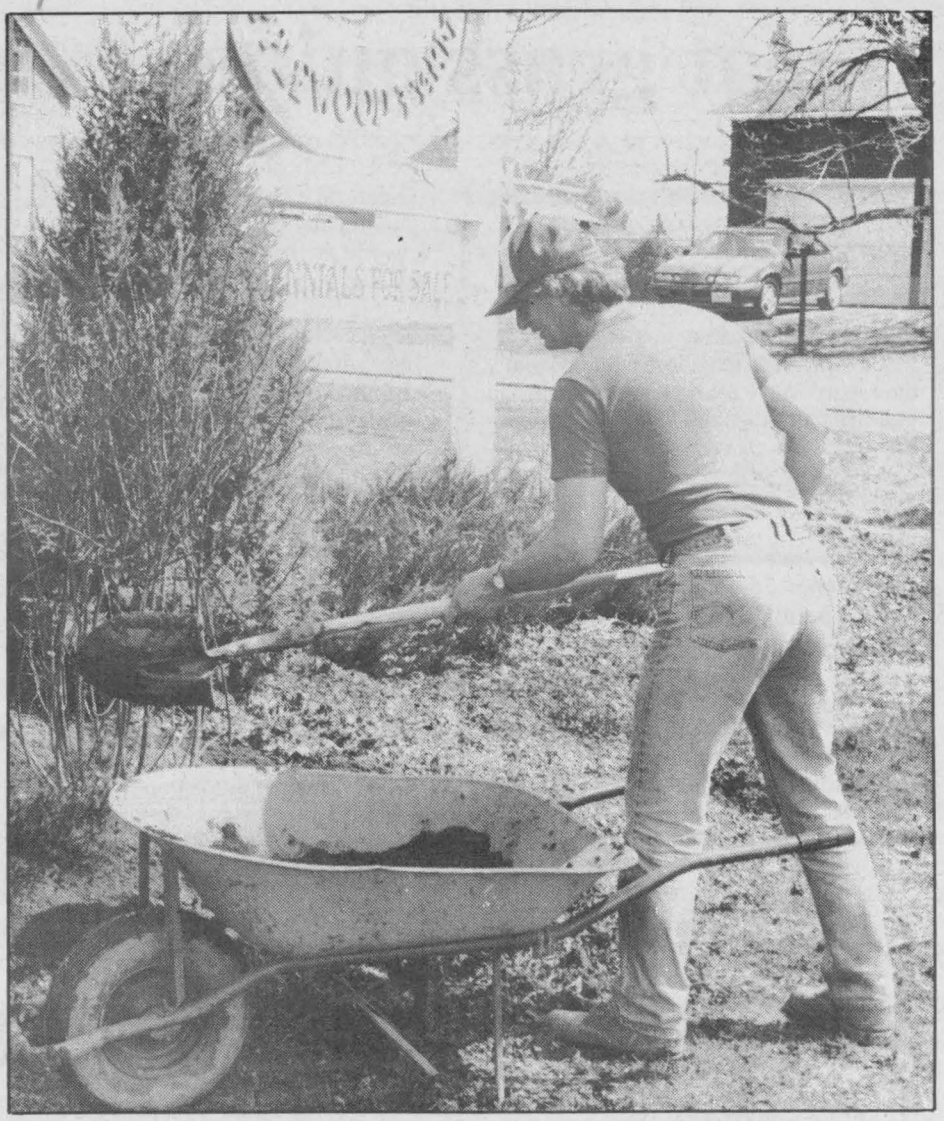
Another consideration for the perennial shopper is when they want their flowers to bloom. Johnston says perennials can bloom up to three months, but some have much shorter lifespans for their flowering season.

"Most people want flowers from April to October... we can achieve that by planting for a succession of blooms, from different perennials."

Perennials are no more difficult to tend to than annual beds, says Johnston, although some varieties are "fussier" to care for and gardeners should be aware.

"I tend to avoid fussy varieties myself, ones that might be more susceptible to mold or insects, or require more help to survive the winter," she says.

But whether gardeners plan to decorate border or balconies, Johnston says there is a perennial to be used to their advantage.



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Great grass guide

The four most important steps to a great lawn are mowing at the correct height, watering when it doesn't rain, fertilizing several times a year and controlling weeds.

The most neglected of these is watering. The most misunderstood is mowing height. Many homeowners cut the lawns much too short in hopes that they won't have to mow again soon. This practice can make the lawn unhealthy. Low mowing encourages weed growth because when grass is very short, sunlight reaches the exposed soil and weeds germinate.

If you are planting a new lawn or if last summer's drought left your lawn looking bare, you can take action now to improve your lawn's appearance.

First, you should get rid of the weeds. Your local Ministry of Agriculture office can give you advice on which herbicides will be effective on the weeds you have. If you prefer not to use chemicals, you can dig the weeds out by hand. This is almost impossible to do with dandelions, however.

Step two is to have your soil tested. This saves you money because you aren't buying and using nutrients your soil doesn't need. If your soil is made up of hard red clay, it will be beneficial to work in peat, compost or leaf mold as well.

Next, rake the surface smooth, removing any rocks of clods or earth. Now you are ready to spread seed. Directions on the bag of seed will tell you how much seed to spread in what size space.

For small areas, the seed can be distributed by hand. Make sure to do this as evenly as possible. Larger areas will require a seed spreader to spread seed evenly and to make the job easier.

Seed should be covered with 1/8–1/4 inch of soil, peat or compost to encourage faster germination. The last step is to apply mulch covered with a thin layer of straw.

The most important step of aftercare for a new lawn is watering. Immediately after the seed is sown, give the area the equivalent of an inch of rain. A can set up under the sprinkler can be used to measure the amount of water.

Don't let the ground surface dry out until you have two inches of new growth on your grass. That may mean watering daily if temperatures are high and the sun shines brightly. You should first mow when the new growth reaches three inches in height.

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Bounteous gardens begin at root level

(NU)—The secret to beautiful gardens is found at root level—in the soil. So don't covet your neighbor's fabulous flowers, stunning shrubs, venerable vegetables and luscious lawns; build the foundation needed for a yard that will rival Eden.

Plant roots require soil that is loamy, neutral, with the capacity for good drainage and full of organic material. Chances are that the plot of earth that's your property doesn't possess all these characteristics.

Do a quick quality check to determine the condition of your soil. Scoop up a handful of dirt and study its texture. If it's thick and lumpy and clings together in a ball, it's heavy clay. Plant roots have a hard time penetrating clay, and they will starve due to lack of air and water.

Luckily, one soil amendment will take over where Mother Nature, or the developers, left off. Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss improves the texture and performance of all soils, both good and bad. It will aerate clay, bind sand, dramatically reduce the leaching of nutrients and hold up to 20 times its weight in water.

A general rule of thumb is to work a two-inch layer into the top six inches of soil. For year-round soil conditioning, add Canadian Peat Moss to the garden in both the spring, before planting, and in the fall, after harvesting.

The pH level of your garden should also be analyzed so necessary adjustments can be made. The pH, or level of alkalinity or acidity, is measured on a scale of 1 to 14. Seven is neutral; numbers above indicate alkaline soil and numbers below show acidic conditions. Soil amendments and fertilizers may affect the acidity or alkalinity of your planting bed. Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss is again beneficial because it has a predictable pH level of 3.4 to 4.8.

A soil test will help determine accurately the pH of your soil. Remember lawns, vegetables and most flowers prefer a neutral to slightly acid soil, such as pH 6.0 to 7.0.

Plants require three major nutrients: nitrogen (N), which encourages growth of plant tissues; phosphorus (P), which stimulates cell development, fruiting and disease resistance, and potassium or potash (K), which helps plants form starches and sugars as well as resist disease and drought. Fertilizers are labeled with three-number formulas, such as 5-10-10 or 10-10-10, referring to the percentage of N-P-K within the mix.

An organic product harvested from bogs 7,000 to 12,000 years old, sphagnum peat moss is found in cold, wet climates north of the 45th parallel. Canada, the Russian federation and Germany are major producers of sphagnum peat moss. Sphagnum moss was one of the first plants to grow on land as the glaciers receded at the end of the Ice Age.

Over the centuries, the perennial sphagnum plants have grown and formed layers. As the layers decompose, they become sphagnum peat moss, an enduring fibrous substance with large cavities that absorb air and water, the way a sponge does.

Harvesting Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss for horticultural use is an ingenious energy-efficient process. First, the top 1/2 inch of the peat bog is raked and left to dry in the sun. Once dry, it is picked up by large vacuum-like machines. Then, it is screened to remove roots and other debris and pressed in bales.

Not all peat is Sphagnum

There are other types of peat moss, such as those formed from the remains of sedge and reed grasses, which are found in more temperate climates. These "peats" are more highly decomposed than Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss and, therefore, do not last as long. Because Canadian Peat has a stronger structure than other peat products, it has a greater capacity to provide plants with the proper balance of air and water.

There is an alternative to pure Canadian Peat: compost-enriched Canadian Peat Moss. Vegetable peelings, lawn and garden debris and coffee grounds needn't waste away in the city dump. Mixed in a 50-50 ratio with Canadian Peat Moss, compost makes an excellent nutrient that also improves the texture of the soil.

Peat will deodorize the compost and soak up excess moisture which often collects in composting receptacles. Just add a shovelful or two of garden soil or steam-sterilized manure as well as two cups of limestone and blend the ingredients.

Canadian Peat is not just an excellent soil conditioner; it's also a great value for the dollar. Packed in compressed bales that double in volume once opened, long-lasting Canadian Peat stores and releases nutrients and moisture to roots slowly, thereby cutting down on the frequency plants need to be watered and fertilized.

At a time of increasing concern about environmental issues, it is comforting to know that this soil conditioner is a completely natural resource. A bale of Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss is free of insect life, weed seeds, and harmful salts and chemicals. Make sure the bale contains pure sphagnum peat moss by looking for the words "Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss," the slogan "Healthier Growth, Naturally," and Canada's symbol, the maple leaf.

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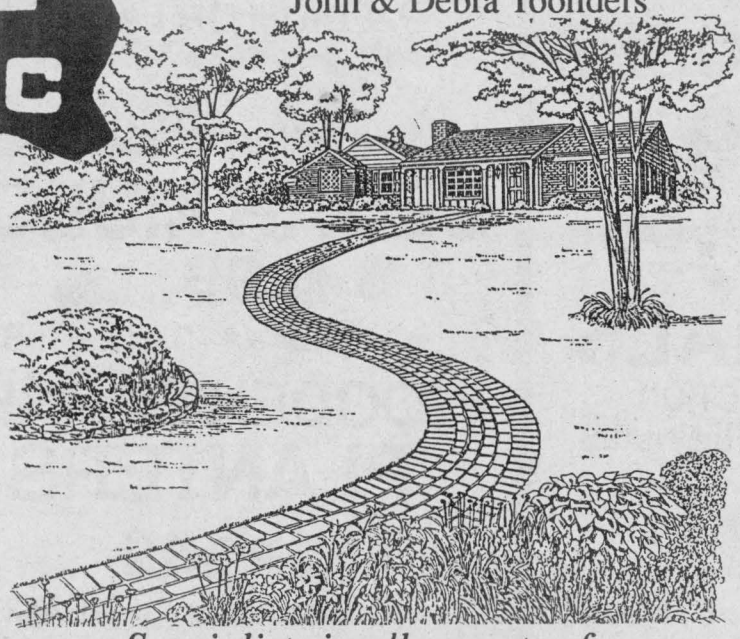

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