

## Take care with seedlings

Organization and careful preparation before transplanting seedlings can help ensure a healthy garden, says T.J. Blom, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food horticulturist.

"First, remove stones and debris from the garden. Next loosen the soil and poke holes for the transplants."

Adding pre-wetted peat moss to the holes before transplanting will give plants a good start.

Mr. Blom says it is best to transplant seedlings at night. Water seedlings several hours before transplanting.

When ready to transplant, gently tap the sides of the pot to remove the plant.

"Keep the roots and soil together as much as possible, then put the roots in the new hole and pat the soil around them."

After transplanting, Mr. Blom recommends watering as needed and fertilizing after two or three days.

"One-half to one pound of regular fertilizer per 100 square feet of garden space should be adequate."

Provide cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, and melons with up to four square feet of space. Cabbage, peppers, broccoli, and brussels sprouts require less space.



Peter Flikkema

## Farr Hardware sold

Farr Hardware in downtown Georgetown has gone from being a one-man business to a family concern as the result of a change in ownership.

The store, which was formerly owned by Michael Farr, has been sold to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Flikkema of Brampton. This is the first

store the couple have owned, although Mrs. Flikkema and some of their children have worked in stores before.

Mr. Flikkema is a carpenter, and plans to continue doing carpentry work part-time. Once the store has been organized, he may be doing carpentry work Monday through Wednesday, while

Mrs. Flikkema works in the store.

"We'd talked about how we wanted to go into a store," Mrs. Flikkema said. "Then we heard this store was for sale, and my husband said he wouldn't mind going into the hardware business."

"The Flikkemas have been open for business since Saturday, but much of their time is presently being devoted to taking inventory and organizing the stock," Mrs. Flikkema said. It is hard to say how long it will take to get everything organized.

## Consumers warned of fly-by-night operators

Consumers should be aware of fly-by-night home improvement contractors at this time of year, the minister of consumer and commercial relations has warned.

Larry Grossman said the consumer services offices receive many complaints about driveway pavers, pool installers, renovators, roofers and other home improvement businesses every spring.

"Most of the people in this business are honest and competent," said Mr. Grossman, "but there are a few bad apples who do poor jobs or don't finish what they start and disappear before the consumer can seek redress."

"Numerous complaints concern contractors who had not completed the work as agreed to in the contract. In one instance a home renovator tore a kitchen apart and then disappeared with the payment," he said.

"However, consumers should be able to avoid these fly-by-night operators by following these guidelines:

Get warranty details in writing. Remember a warranty is only as good as the company backing it.

Get starting and completion dates in writing. You won't be happy if, for instance, your new swimming pool isn't completed until September.

Under The Mechanics Lien Act you are required to withhold 15 per cent of the total amount of the contract for 37 days after completion of the job. This protects you if the contractor fails to pay the subcontractor or employees. If a contract is involved, make sure it clearly specifies all work to be done as well as starting and completion dates.

In addition to these general points, consumers should heed this advice when dealing with contractors in the following fields:

**DRIVEWAY PAVERS**  
Be wary of contractors who say they are in the neighborhood only for the day and offer bargain prices. Remember that the contrac-

tor giving the cheapest estimate won't necessarily do the best job.

Remember once you've signed a contract it's a legal and binding document. Make sure the contract specified all work to be done before you sign.

When the contractor quotes the asphalt depth, make sure he is referring to compacted asphalt. About two inches of compacted asphalt is normal.

Remember that the contractor is not responsible for damage to the driveway caused by gas spillage or sharp objects. He is also not responsible for weeds growing through the asphalt unless the contract stated weed killer would be used.

**POOL INSTALLERS**  
Obtain a written statement of who is responsible for any problems—the seller, installer, subcontractor or manufacturer. Make sure your pool conforms to municipal by-laws,

including fencing. Make sure your estimates include all costs for the pool and installation. Other costs include fencing and water, which, in some municipalities, has to be trucked in at considerable expense.

**ROOFERS**  
Pay a reputable roofer for an inspection to determine whether you need a new roof or repairs. Remember that a long-term warranty can be worthless if the company doesn't survive as long as the warranty applies. Make sure the estimate includes all costs which may include stripping old shingles, clean-up and carpentry work.

The network of consumer services offices across Ontario handled approximately 1,000 complaints about home improvements and related businesses in the past 12 months, said Mr. Grossman. Several contractors were convicted under The Busi-

ness Practices Act which prohibits false, misleading or deceptive claims.

Several contractors were also convicted under The Consumer Protection Act because they failed to register as itinerant (door-to-door) sellers.

"Each spring we also receive many complaints about garden products that consumers buy through the mail. We recently ordered a company to stop promising 100-pound watermelons and other marvels," he said. "Think twice about the wonderful pictures in the advertisements. Many of these plants will not grow that well in our climate."

The ministry offers many services to assist consumers. In addition to handling complaints at the consumer services offices, free material on home repairs, insulation, consumer protection, mail-order, phony charities and many related areas is available.

## Dollhouses are more than just kids' stuff for miniature lovers!

Have you ever dreamed of living the life of Marie Antoinette at Versailles or the master of Windsor Castle, or one of the O'Hara's of Tara?

Many adults are finding an enchanting way of making all of their "dream home" fantasies come true in the wonderful world of miniatures.

Miniature collecting is the fastest-growing adult hobby in America today. It is steadily gaining on the front-running stamp and coin collecting.

Kathryn Falk opened one of the first miniature specialty shops, Mini Mundus

located in New York City, when she spotted the trend three years ago.

Women discovered that they could have a miniature what they couldn't afford in real life. Then they persuaded their husbands, fathers, and other members of the family to join in. Now the hobby has become more refined.

People are creating lovely dollhouses that could be valuable investments.

Very often grandparents will duplicate their family house for the grandchildren, or parents will build their dream house in the country.

Two years ago Ms. Falk expanded her business with a direct mail catalogue—a miniature making school and the first miniature lumberyard.

Here customers can buy all the building and decorating parts, such as fauxwood wallpaper, tiny hardware, electric lighting fixtures, doors and windows, and even bricks, everything scaled one inch to one foot.

In addition to this mini enterprise of major proportions, Ms. Falk has just published *Miniature: A Delightful and Secure Hobby For Dollhouses & Fans*.

## A boy's room that keeps working 'round the clock

Boys' rooms are bound to take a lot of rough and tumble play from your son's activities—practicing the latest football, basketball, and skateboard maneuvers. So much space is possible. That's why bunk beds are the most sensible and practical choice.

If you have two sons sharing a room, the bunk beds will give both of them plenty of floor space and a feeling of privacy for studying or sleeping.

Bunk beds are ideal for overnight guests, too, but at the most they only make room for one additional person. For unexpected company, or when your son wants to have more than one friend sleep over, a down-filled sleeping bag is just the answer.

It will be comfortable in central heating as well as for outdoor camping, rolls up into a small space for storage, and takes up little space on a camping trip.

This functional bedroom is

done in attractive "masculine" colors. The predominant blue and green plaid carpet with yellow accents coordinates with the thin slat blinds to establish the color theme.

Carrel-colored down comforters add an additional color accent that harmonizes with the basic scheme.

Comforters are the most popular bed covering choice today. They make bed-making easy and last a feature that's really important with bunk beds, which are harder to move than a single bed.

A good comforter will give your son years of service, standing up to his activities, and look right in any decorating scheme as his tastes grow and change.

Built-in bookcases frame the bunk bed and create lots of extra shelf space. The wood framed bed is painted royal blue to accent the carpet and to blend in with the back wall. It contains three deep drawers for storing out of season clothes, study materials and extra games.

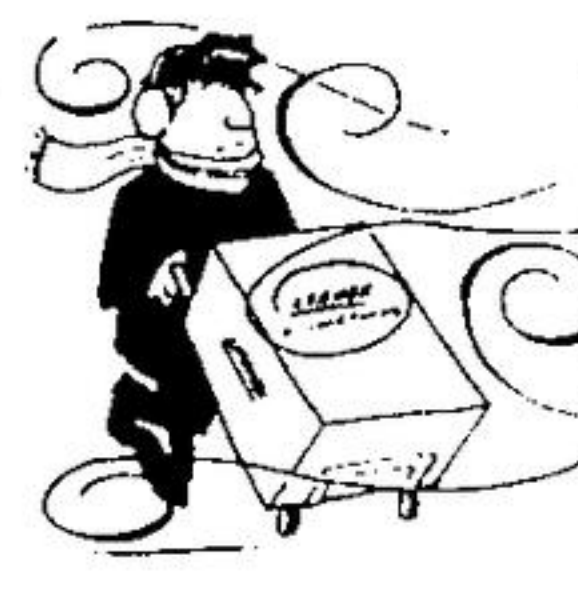
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