

## Time-saving ideas for your landscape

**GUELPH** —By designing a low maintenance landscape you can reduce the amount of time you spend tending your flower beds, lawn, and shrubs, says Horticultural Consultant Pat Tucker, former head of the grounds department at the University of Guelph.

You can eliminate most of your pruning chores by choosing slow-growing dwarf varieties of trees and shrubs.

The Korean Boxwood (*Buxus microphylla koreana*), the dwarf snowball (*Viburnum opulus 'Nana'*), or Arctic willow (*Salix purpurea 'Gracilis'*) are good choices.

Look for plant varieties that can grow just about anywhere and are known to be hardy and dependable.

"Plants that lose their leaves, drop their fruit or their flowers—such as the Norway maple, the tulip tree, or the catalpa—are poor choices if your aim is to eliminate work," Tucker said.

Of course, perennial flower beds are time-savers because the plants bloom year after year.

Try bleeding hearts, peonies, iris, phlox, delphiniums and daylilies, hardy geraniums and black-eyed Susans.

You'll find it is easier to care for your flower beds if plants are grouped and you will enjoy the added attractiveness of volume.

And by curving your flower beds, you'll be able to do most of your trimming chores with a lawn mower.

To keep weeds down, use a mulch such as bark, stone chips, or cocoa beans.

And where grass simply will not grow—under mature trees, on a slope—why not try a ground cover?

English ivy, pachysandra, periwinkle or euonymus are usually trouble-free, once they are established.

Before planting a ground cover, you must get rid of weeds; cultivate the area frequently to destroy weeds or use an herbicide.

If you use a chemical weed killer, follow the application rates recommended by the manufacturer.



Perennial flower beds are time-savers because the plants bloom year after year. Here, Master Gardener Jill Hutchinson of London, Ont., shows off her perennial garden. Master Gardeners are gardening enthusiasts who have received formal horticultural training through the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Master Gardener program. Once trained, Master Gardeners are available to answer questions from the public.

"The chemical kills grasses and weeds but it will leave the dead roots and crowns in place. These will hold the soil and prevent it from being washed away before your young plants can take hold," Tucker said.

Occasionally, your ground cover will require a trim or insect and disease control; fertilize once in spring, at similar rates used for lawns.

While planning your no-trouble landscape, don't overlook the value of a low-maintenance shrub, such as forsythia, honeysuckle and viburnums; these can cover a large area at relatively little cost.

Or plant a mixture of trees and shrubs to provide all the design criteria of texture, colour and form.

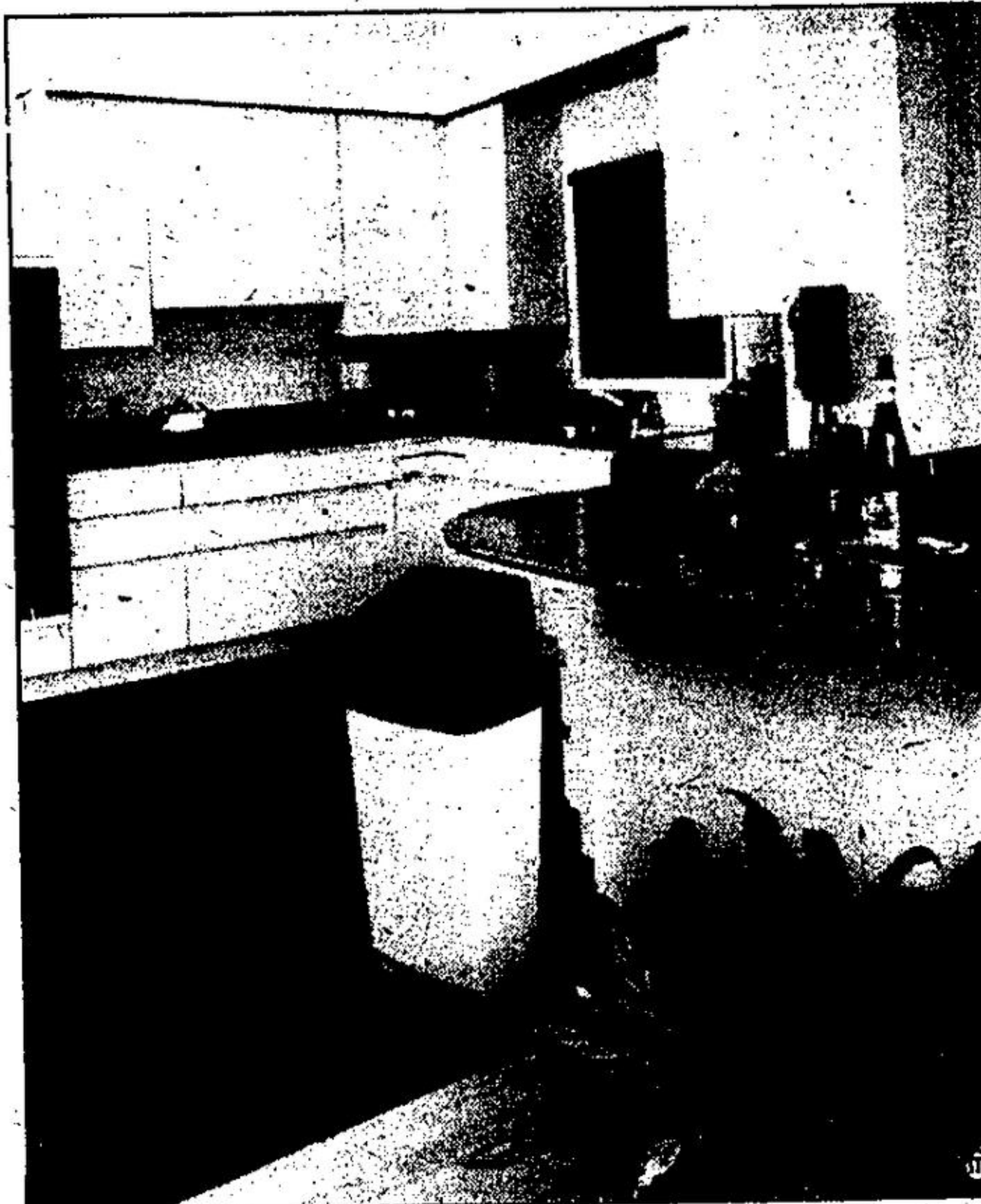
Evergreens, particularly the spreading types such as Green Acres, Andorra and Tamarix junipers, are used extensively in the landscape; they tolerate hot, sunny sites and provide texture and colour during the winter months.

These are also relatively free of insects and disease.

But they are slow to fill in and expensive to purchase, Tucker says.

Broadleaved evergreens such as wintercreeper, low-growing shrubs such as cotoneaster or herbaceous perennials such as creeping cinquefoil are also good choices.

These grow to a minimum height of 15 centimetres and they will also suppress weeds, fill in quickly and can be easily propagated.



IN THE SWING!—The black and white Hefty Designs Tall Swing 'N Stay wastebasket is sleek enough to fit into any contemporary kitchen. This model also is available in 10 other color combinations.

## Accent is on color in kitchens

Decorating tips this spring include brighter and more vivid colors than ever. Red, black, classic white and slate blue are some of the more trendy accents in kitchen decor.

However, even though consumer research experts agree that colors are important, they find time and again that a common-sense approach is most successful in using color.

Hefty Designs took this approach when creating its new wastebasket line. The Hefty Designs team interviewed color experts to confirm the trendy and the traditional, and asked more than 2,000 consumers what problems they had with their waste containers.

Here are a few of the features that Hefty Designs—as a result—incorporated into its new product line:

- Lids in bright, trendy colors—red, yellow, mauve, federal blue and black;
- Lids in traditional colors—slate blue, chocolate, yellow, white and beige;
- Baskets in three harmonious base colors—slate blue, white and beige;
- Lids that stay open for easier use, then close when the user decides to close them;

- A ring that locks the trash bag to the rim of the can, so even heavy trash won't pull the bag into the can; it also prevents ugly bag overhang;

- A bag-storage shelf on the can that keeps packages of trash bags handy.

Each wastebasket is made of durable plastic for easy cleaning, and every can has a glossy finish to keep the kitchen looking neat and clean.

Each model carries a full, five-year warranty against breaking during normal household use.

The Hefty Designs line consists of five models: Two Step 'N Stay models—a tall and medium size—have an extra-wide foot pedal. The Tall Swing 'N Stay model has a lid that swings away from the trash. The Tall Lift 'N Stay has an easily operated lift lid, and the smaller Open Basket model is perfect for tight spaces.

Each wastebasket in the Hefty Designs line was designed to accommodate standard trash bags sold in stores. The tall wastebasket models fit perfectly with tall 13-gal. bags, and the medium Hefty Designs models fit 8-gal. medium bags.

## Choosing an energy efficient house

—During the balmy days of spring and summer, the last thing anyone wants to be reminded of is the inevitable return of winter, the other fact of life in the northern hemisphere.

Many Canadians develop a mental block to snow, sleet and howling northern winds as soon as the last down-filled jacket is stored in spring. However, if you are shopping for a new house this spring, keep the memory alive; at least until you are satisfied that the dwelling is energy efficient.

Choosing an Energy Efficient House: A buyer's guide, published by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, answers common energy questions. The booklet aims to make energy-conscious house hunters aware of the elements of energy efficiency and where they can be found in the dwelling.

There are five components that work together to create the energy efficient home: insulation, airtight construction, controlled ventilation, passive solar heating and an efficient heating system.

When these factors interact properly, fuel consumption can be up to 80 per cent less than the conventional house. The well-designed, well-built energy efficient house is also draft-free with even temperature distribution. It will be cooler in the summer, warmer in the winter, quieter, less dusty, and maintain a comfortable level of humidity.

CMHC's guide will steer you clear of the pitfalls of poor construction or design. These include higher-than-necessary construction costs, overheating in spring and fall, poor air quality, condensation build-up on interior walls and windows, and a house that may be more expensive to heat than expected.

Although there are no guarantees of energy performance, Canada's building industry is responding to the energy needs of homeowners. You can ensure a well-built, energy efficient home by asking the builder or seller about the five factors of energy efficiency.

### Insulation

First determine the insulation levels recommended for different areas of the house by local building codes (these will vary according to regional climate). The value of the various types of insulation are assigned RSI units which

measure the resistance to heat loss. Compare recommended levels with those actually used.

Take a good look at the insulation to see if it is properly installed. Check that it is evenly distributed throughout the house, but kept clear of chimneys, ventilation features, electrical wiring and plumbing penetrations.

If buying a home with a cathedral ceiling or flat roof make sure there is enough room for insulation and ventilation between the insulation and the roof deck (normally 300-500 mm).

The energy efficient building will have higher levels of insulation in exterior walls than its conventional counterpart.

Good construction means the avoidance of thermal bridges, that is, areas where heat can bypass insulation and escape through building materials. Studs, floor joists and masonry walls can act as energy-conducting thermal bridges.

In the basement, walls should be insulated right to the floor and foundation soil well-drained to reduce heat loss and prevent frost heave.

Ideally, insulation is applied to the outside as it keeps the wall warm and frost free. Check that the above-ground wall area has been covered by a protective material.

Floors over unheated garages or crawl spaces should also be insulated. Many builders insulate the basement slab to increase the amount of comfortable living space available in the house.

### Airtightness

The energy efficient house does not rely on insulation alone. Airtight construction—keeping warm air in and cold air out—is also a major factor to consider.

In extremely cold or damp climates, airtight construction is vital because frost and condensation can build up, often causing structural damage to the house.

Normally, a depressurization test is performed on a house to determine how "tight" it is and where leaks are located. Before you buy, ask the builder if this test was carried out and what the results were.

Airtightness is achieved when a sound air-vapour barrier is constructed

throughout the house. Sometimes described as a large sealed bag, this barrier stops interior and exterior air from passing through the walls and stops water vapour from entering the wall from inside the house.

A word of caution: once construction is completed, it is impossible to tell if the air-vapour barrier has been installed correctly without tearing apart finished walls. Because of this, it is vital they buyer check depressurization test results.

**BEAT THE SPRING RUSH!!**

Call Now!! FREE ESTIMATES

**SOLARIUMS — SUN PORCHES**

**in Cedar and Aluminum**

- ★ POOL ENCLOSURES
- ★ ENTRANCES, etc.
- ★ SUN DECKS

**Sell & Install — Aluminum Windows and Doors**

**VICTOR'S**

**GLASS ENCLOSURES**

SHOWROOM  
55 SINCLAIR AVE.,  
UNIT 16  
GEORGETOWN, ONT.,

(Over 25 Years Experience)

**416-873-1258**