


Exterior landscaping

May of this year will once again be declared National Garden Month in Canada and federal Agriculture Minister, Don Mazankowski has endorsed it saying, "I am particularly pleased to see that working for a clean environment is among the themes being promoted by the Canadian Garden Council. Conservation of our national resources is critical to the long-term health and quality of Canadian life. We all share a responsibility to ensure basic resources are available to pass on to future generations."

On the other hand, the contributions made to our environment are not the main reason Canadians spend nearly three billion dollars annually on exterior landscaping. There are at least two others. One is the aesthetic considerations, which we'll come back to; and the other is the ability of good landscaping to increase substantially the value of the home it enhances and beautifies. Well-designed houses, located on appropriately-sized lots, realize a 15 percent increase in home value or selling price when nicely landscaped, according to sources. And, on an average subdivision home, the recovery value of dollars spent on plants and landscaping is 100 to 200 percent compared to only about 40 to 70 percent for a similar investment in a new deck or patio.

Now, the aesthetics! On just what type of plants should you make your investment? First and foremost, if you are just beginning, either with a new house, or a re-sale, consider shade first. Deciduous trees such as ash, birches, most maples and lindens will eventually grow into large trees, providing major areas of shade for your garden and home. Evergreens such as spruce and pine, except the dwarf forms, will do the same, but the shade (though usually of a lesser nature, tree for tree, than deciduous types) will be present in the winter as well. Smaller trees, on the other hand, will provide more confined areas of shade. Trees in this category are Ivory Silk tree lilac, amur maple and crab apples. The Canadian Garden Council advises that for all planting you'll do during National Garden Month, your local garden centre or professional landscape firm is the place to enquire for specific, local information.

Other planting you'll want to carry out soon could include a hedge for privacy, for example deciduous Alpine currant and Nannyberry which lose their leaves, or evergreen cedar. Flowering and foliage shrubs are available in a vast array of attributes from which to choose. They are useful along property lines and fences as a background for flower borders of annuals or perennials. Examples would be lilacs, spiraea and honeysuckles for spring bloom; Sorbaria and St. John's-wort for summer flowering; Hydrangea for autumn bloom; silverleaf and yellowtwig dogwood for coloured, variegated foliage the entire growing season; and serviceberries and viburnums for attractive autumn berries.

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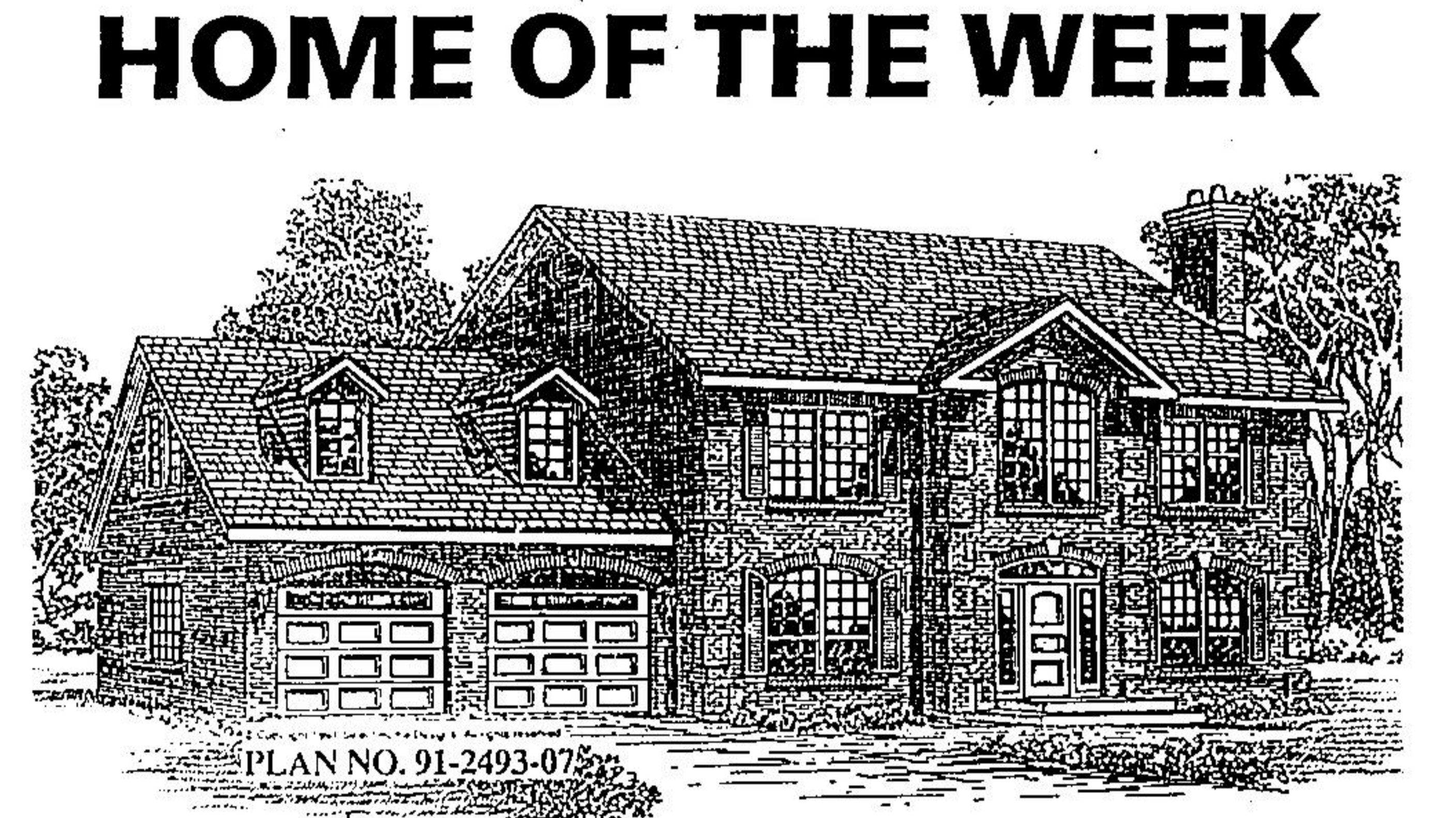
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Fish-scale siding and covered porch with gracefully arched woodwork provide curb appeal for this three bedroom home. A vaulted foyer, brightened by a distinctive second storey bay window, spills to the living room and adjoining dining room. The vaulted ceilings continue through the living room to enhance the spaciousness of this area. Twin circle-top windows in the living room mirror the arched woodwork and carry the theme inside. The country kitchen offers a convenient U-shaped food preparation area, bay window eating area, gas fireplace, TV alcove and double door access to the rear garden; a natural gathering spot for the family.

Upstairs, the master bedroom boasts a walk-through wardrobe and three-piece ensuite with whirlpool spa.

The two additional bedrooms each have private access to a three-piece bathroom with soaking tub.

The finished floor area of this home is 1,742 square feet. Space for future expansion is available in the full basement.

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