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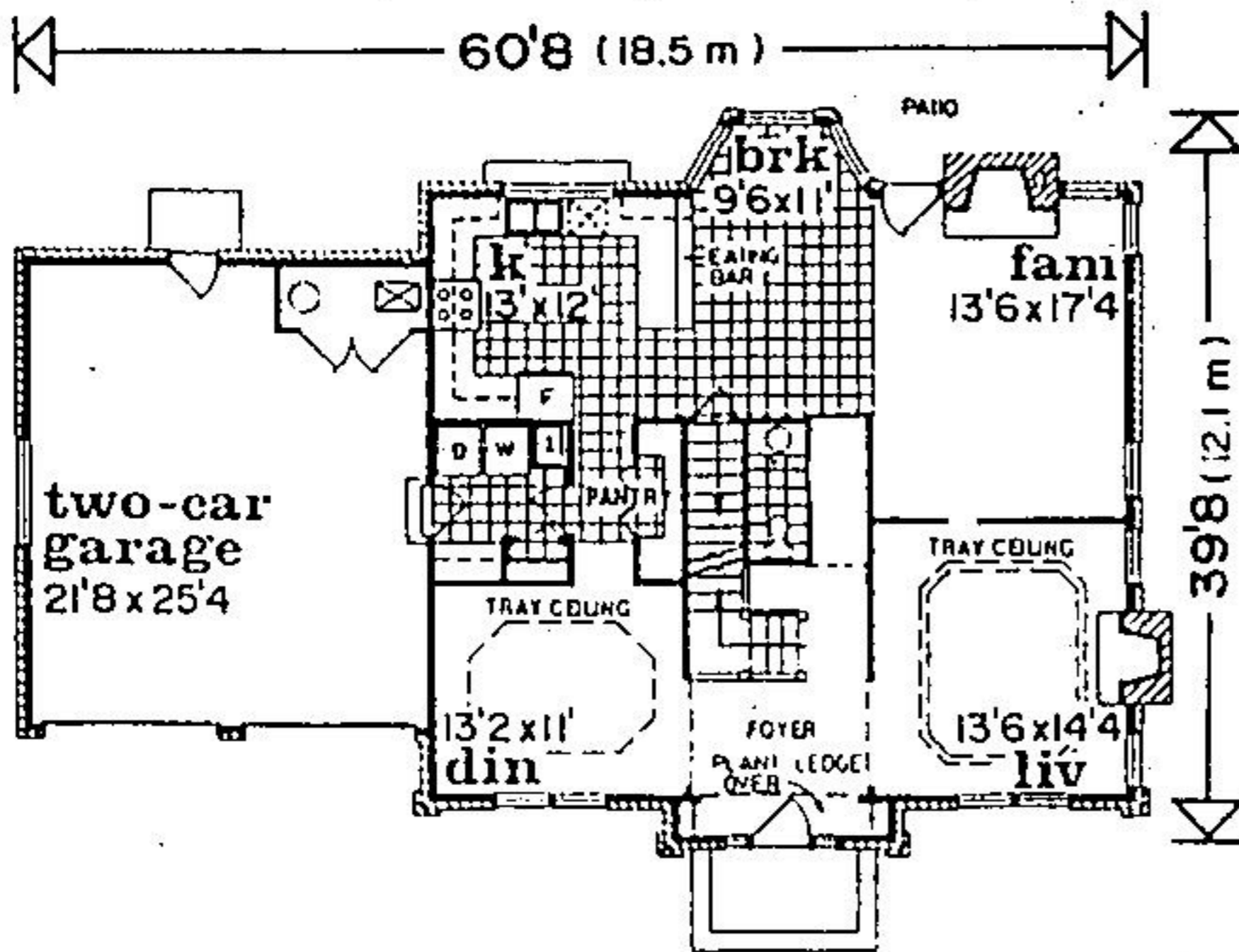
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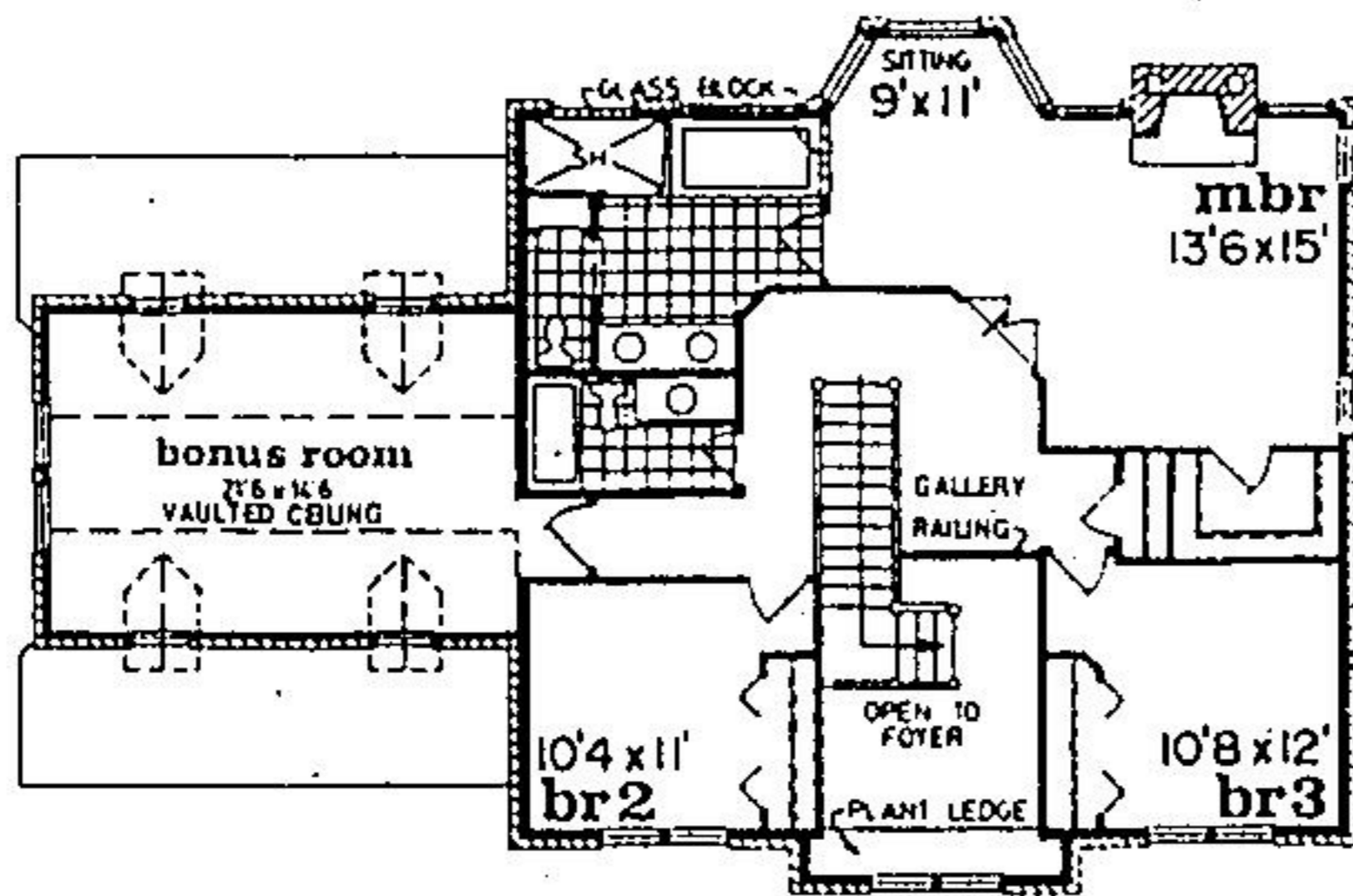
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# Planning gardens

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

Once you've raked, cleaned up and prepared your garden and flower beds, it's time to decide what to put in them.

Planting time varies across Ontario. Gardeners in the southern part of the province can usually plant earlier than those in central and northern regions.

Start with self-grown or purchased vegetable plants that can withstand a bit of frost, such as broccoli. Also sow seeds of vegetables that germinate in cool soils such as peas and many root crops.

Many seeds, such as peas, beans, carrots, lettuce, spinach, corn and potato, are best sown directly into the ground. Others, like broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes and peppers, are best planted as seedlings.

In small gardens, select vegetables that yield a lot of limited space, such as lettuce, onions and snap beans. You can make the most of your garden space by planting lettuce seeds between slow-growing vegetables such as broccoli and cabbage.

You can also increase productivity by planting fruits and vegetables among flowers. Herbs such as chives and parsley and fruits such as strawberries make neat borders for flower beds. Carrots and asparagus mix in well with perennials.

To ward off insects that may attack your garden vegetables, plant marigolds among your beans, spinach, tomatoes, celery and other crops. The roots of marigolds produce a chemical that can kill some garden insects.

## FLOWER BEDS

Flower beds are most effective when located along the edge of a lawn, alongside a house or driveway, or as islands in a lawn. Borders should feature tall plants in the background, medium-sized plants in the middle and dwarf plants at the front.

Island beds are most attractive with tall plants in the middle, medium-sized plants on both sides and dwarf plants at the edges. Containers such as large flower pots and wooden barrels also make good flowerbeds. These should all have drainage holes at the bottom, which are covered with stones to prevent soil from washing out.

Even if you don't have a green thumb, your flower beds will flourish by including some hardy annuals. Most popular are impatiens, geraniums, marigolds, petunias, pansies and begonias.

Remember to consider how well the plants you select tolerate shade or sun. If your garden gets six or more hours of sun a day, selected sun-loving plants. Otherwise, stick to shade dwellers.

Impatiens are by far the most popular shade-loving annuals. Marigolds and petunias are great for dry, sunnier spots. Known as 'survivor' plants, these do well almost anywhere and require practically no care.

Most annuals are available in tall and dwarf forms and a variety of sizes in between.

You can combine annuals and perennials together to produce beautiful blooms each season, year after year. But because perennials only put on a flower display for part of a season, these gardens require a little more planning and care.