



Pathfinders Elizabeth Crawford, Jaime Connolly, Nichole Connolly and Lynn Park with Brownie Andrea Hughes attended the Scout-Guide Service at St. Andrew's United Church in Georgetown, Feb. 24. District Commissioner Elaine Hannah gave the sermon, entitled "Love and Serve God."

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# Toyota's new Tercel is a stylish package

## Road Worthy

By JIM ROBINSON

A co-worker who already owns a Toyota Tercel is in the market for a new car and what he wants is - another Tercel.

Five years and more than 80,000 kms later he still finds his Tercel "very economical" to run with more than enough room for his young family and all the stuff you have to carry when you travel like high chairs, playpens- you know the drill.

The 1991 version of the Tercel is now coming to the market and it does so in a very different guise from the past. Gone are the slab sides and lack of verve which made Tercels and Corollas among the blandest of the bland.

In keeping with Toyota's new-found love of the French curve first seen in the Celica and then flowering in the Lexus LS 400, the Tercel in many ways looks like the big Lexus particularly when seen from the front quarter.

With its new "organic" styling, Toyota has achieved what is known as a "cabin forward" design. With a transverse mounted four-cylinder engine driving the front wheels, the space where the clutch and drive tunnel would go can now be used. By shifting the front seats forward so human feet take up this area, you create more room in the back seat and a significantly larger trunk on a given wheelbase.

If you look sideways at a Tercel the trunk isn't very long at all, but open it up and you see a gaping tunnel inside, easily big enough to hold our high chair. By the way, the 60/40 split rear seats have a locking feature inside the trunk which is appreciated in a car costing this little.

As stated the engine is a four of 1.5-litres featuring three valves per cylinder. Fuel injection is standard (praise be) to produce 82 hp and 89 ft./lbs. of torque. You have a choice of a five-speed manual or a three-speed automatic. The test car had the five-speed.

There are three trim levels and, sadly there is no longer a Tercel hatchback, leaving you to choose between two or four doors. The test car was the four-door LE (top of the line) listed at \$10,818. There were a few options like \$90 for handsome light green metallic paint, \$76.10 for carpet mats, and \$351 for the top cassette stereo. The other charge was \$320 for power steering. List as tested was \$11,655.30 but there would be GST on top of that.

Suspension consists of coil

springs over struts at the front with a twist beam at the rear. Toyota says it has fine-tuned wheel travel to improve ride. Stopping power is by assisted discs at the front and drums at the rear.

Stop and go of the new Tercel is pretty good but the package is betrayed by a pair of skinny little high-side tires looking not unlike four Jos. Louis cakes. The LE comes with the bigger P155/R80 13-inch tires. Standard tire, believe it or not is a P145.

I didn't think 80-series tires were being made anymore and you soon find out why when turning a corner. The tires cannot keep pace with the abilities of the chassis-suspension-adhesion rates of the car. The tires simply do not have a big enough contact patch. They want to side-slip at the slightest provocation. Factor in the over-boosted power steering found on the top two models and you have a car which feels nimbler than it is. Here's a lovely car crying out for a pair of P175/70s or 60s.

Anyway, the five-speed shifter is a delight and the big tack let's you know how much more this little engine wants to give. That tach is set in a round binnacle along with the speedo and auxillary gauges. The interior continues the organic styling theme and is pleasant enough to the eye. The cloth seats show just how far ergonomics has come in a few short years. The heater/ventilation controls are easy to understand and reach.

The Tercel has a number of standard extras worth noting like the adjustable pillar shoulder belt anchors, rear seat heater ducts, and a pop-out coffee cup holder. Thank you Toyota!

Toyota continues to excel because it refines models continually. Instead of cutting corners to improve profits, they improve the product and hold the line on pricing. It's worth noting 81 per cent of the steel in the Tercel is rust-proofed matching the content on higher grade models such as the Cressida and Camry.

If you are looking for basic transport with a bit of flair, the 1991 Toyota Tercel certainly deserves your consideration.

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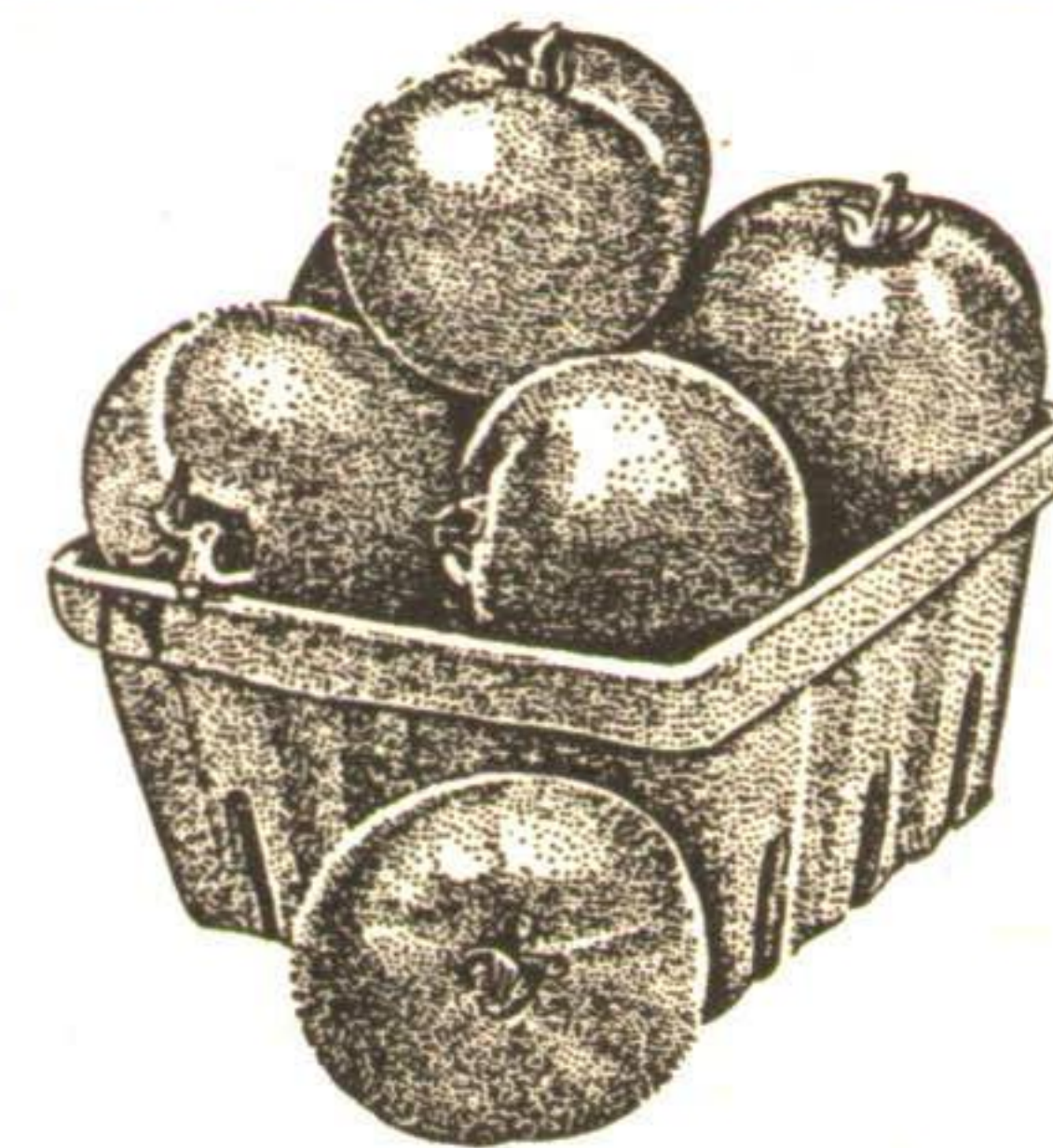
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