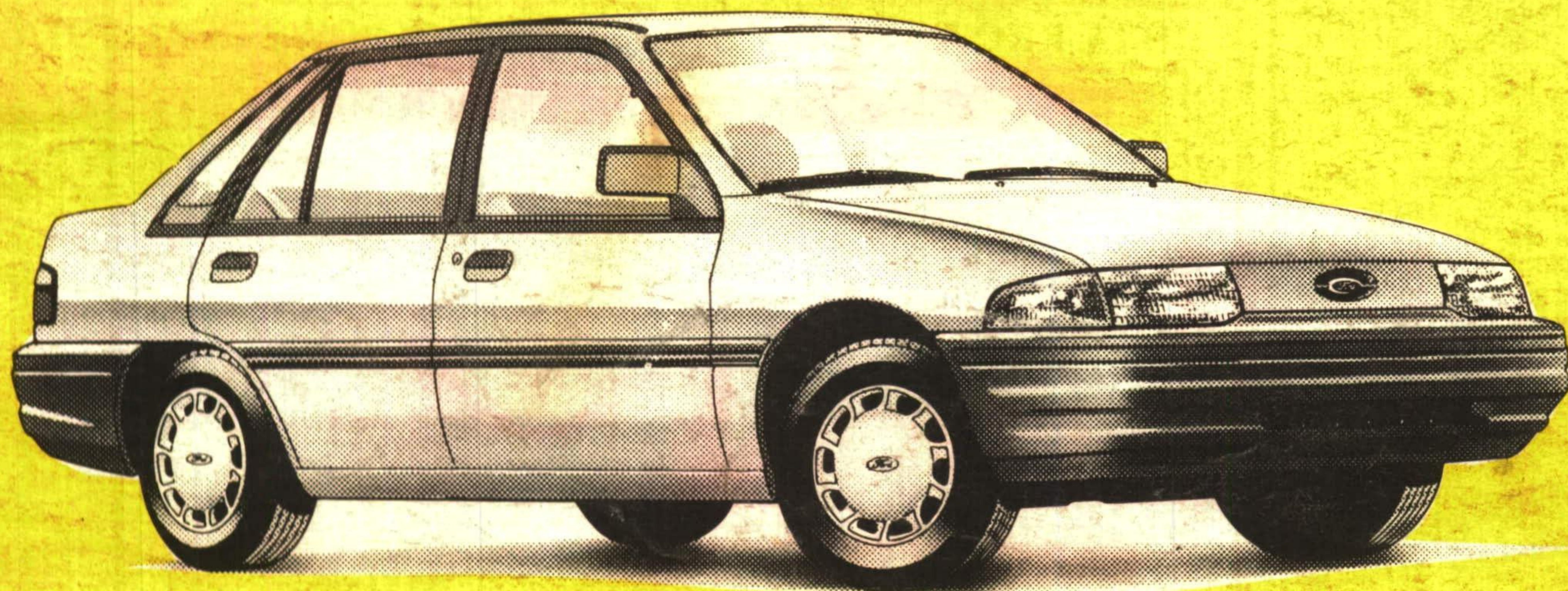


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### GREEN THUMB GARDENING



By **CHRISTINE COLE**  
**SASKATOON BERRIES**

The use of native trees and shrubs in the landscape is increasing in popularity. One reason is that they are very hardy and easy to grow in their native habitat. Their unassuming beauty blends into most landscapes, too. Our own Saskatoon berry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) is an outstanding example of a native shrub that is useful in the landscape (and the kitchen). The Saskatoon berry is a large shrub or small tree (reaches a height of 15 to 20 ft. at maturity) that produces abundant bluish purple fruit. The berries are sweet and juicy when ripe (July) and likened to a Blueberry. However, most people agree that they are tastier than blueberries. The fruits are often used in preserves (jams and jellies) or fruit pies or left for the birds to enjoy. Indians used to mix the fruit of the Saskatoon berry bush with Buffalo meat and fat to make a winter staple known as Pemmican.

The Saskatoon berry blooms in the spring before the leaves have fully expanded. Even though the clusters of white flowers are not large they are still very showy because they are so numerous and they are not hidden by the leaves. The shrub exhibits a white, fluffy appearance when in full bloom. The Saskatoon has glossy, almost round leaves that are usually a lovely yellow color in the fall.

Saskatoons are able to tolerate harsh climates and alkaline soil. They will tolerate full sun or partial shade. However, they are quite adaptable to most conditions and not demanding in their culture. This plant is useful in all facets of landscaping but are most effective when planted in a naturalistic setting or mixed in with a cluster of small evergreens.

Each week Christine Cole of Tuitman's Garden Centre and Landscaping, Highway 25, 1 mile south of Acton, 853-2480, will be presenting helpful tips and information to assist you in creating your garden show-place!

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