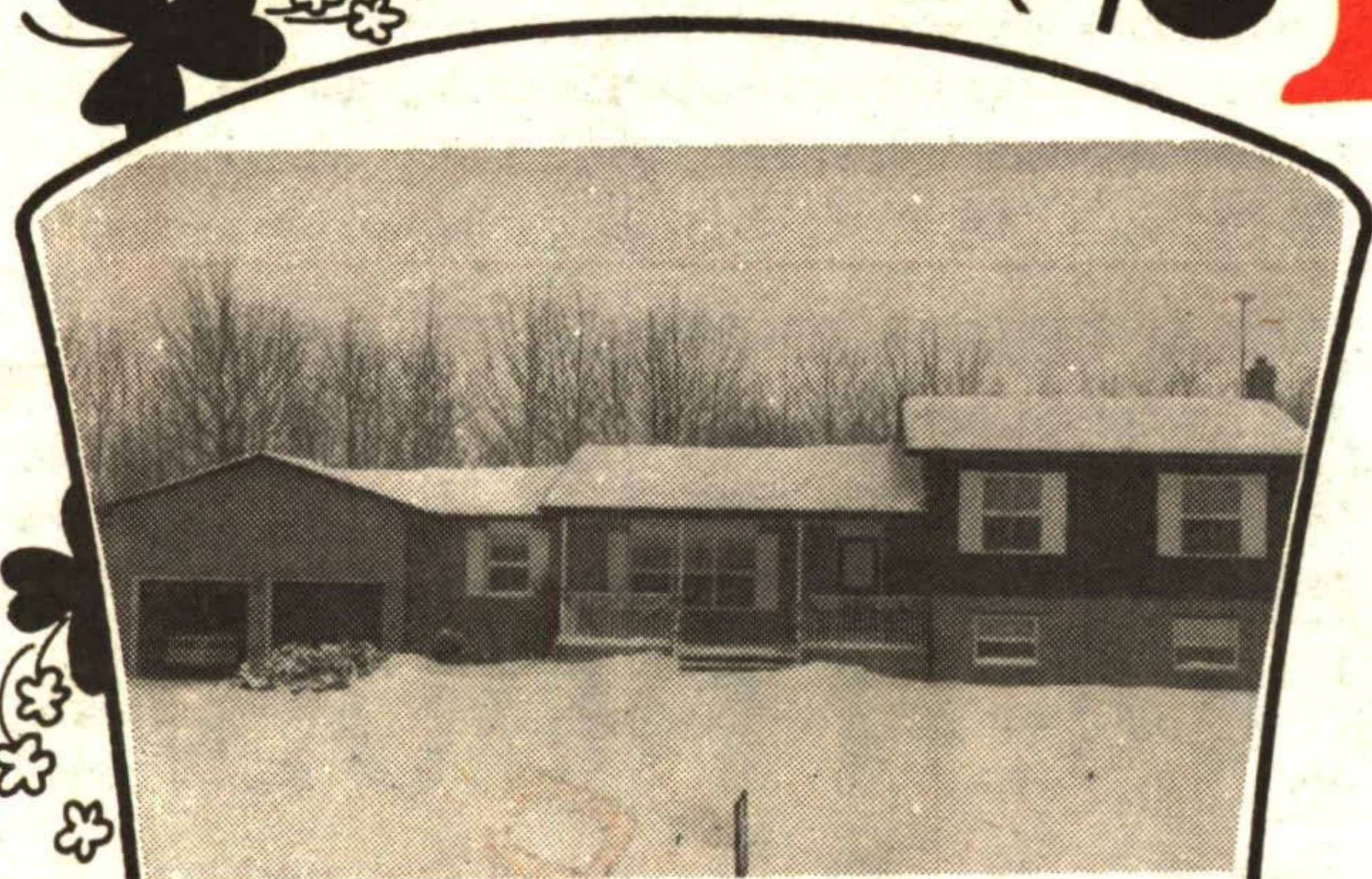


# St. Paddy's Pick



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## GREEN THUMB GARDENING



By **CHRISTINE COLE**

### PRUNING TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF DISEASE

One of the most important benefits of pruning is to improve the health of the tree. Pruning out dead and diseased branches will control the spread of diseases to healthy parts of the tree. This type of pruning is particularly important with stone-bearing fruit trees such as cherries, plums and peaches. These trees are frequently infected with a fungal disease known as "Black Knot". It initially develops on young twigs and can be identified by the hard, crispy, black growths. The growths are usually thicker than the twig and can reach up to one foot long or more.

In the spring a layer of spores forms on the "knots". The spores are then released to infect other branches and other susceptible fruit trees. To prevent further spread of this disease, the knots should be pruned from infected trees in the winter (before the spores develop and disperse). Since this is a fungal disease it can be spread with the pruning equipment. To prevent this, sterilize all pruning equipment with rubbing alcohol or diluted bleach (Javex). Cut off all black knots at least six inches below the visible infection.

Annual pruning will prevent the spread of this disease and result in healthier and more productive fruit trees.

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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ACTON

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