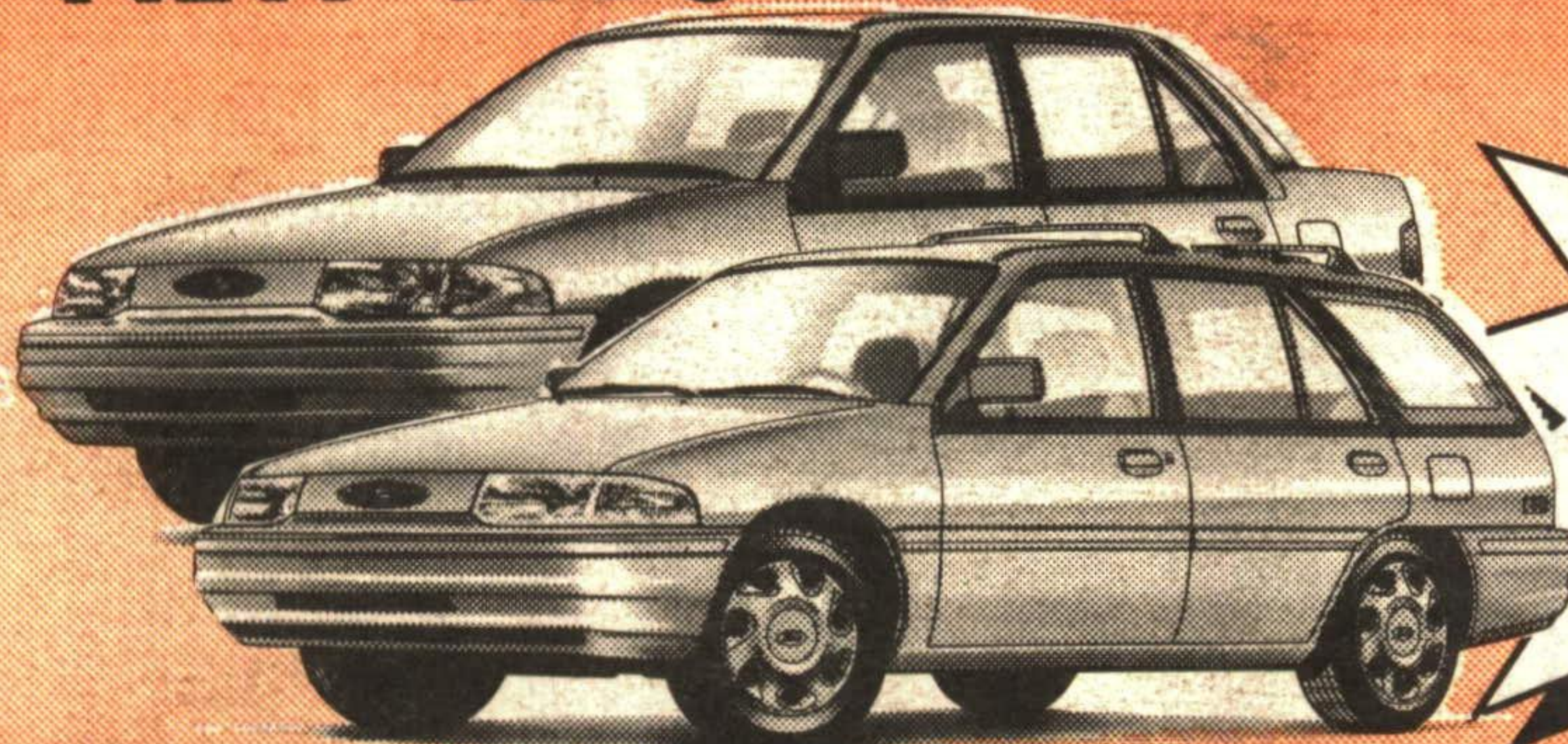


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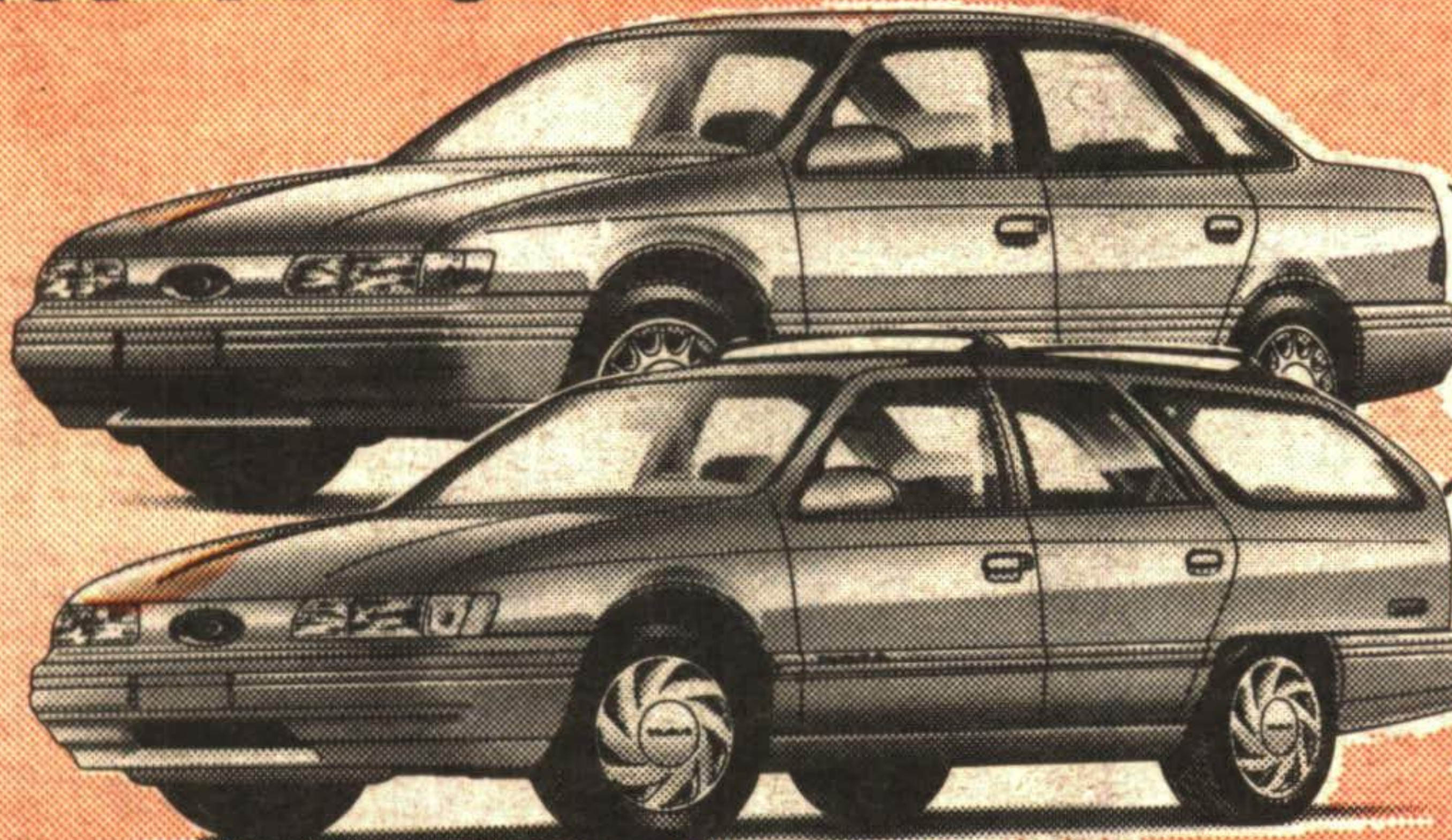


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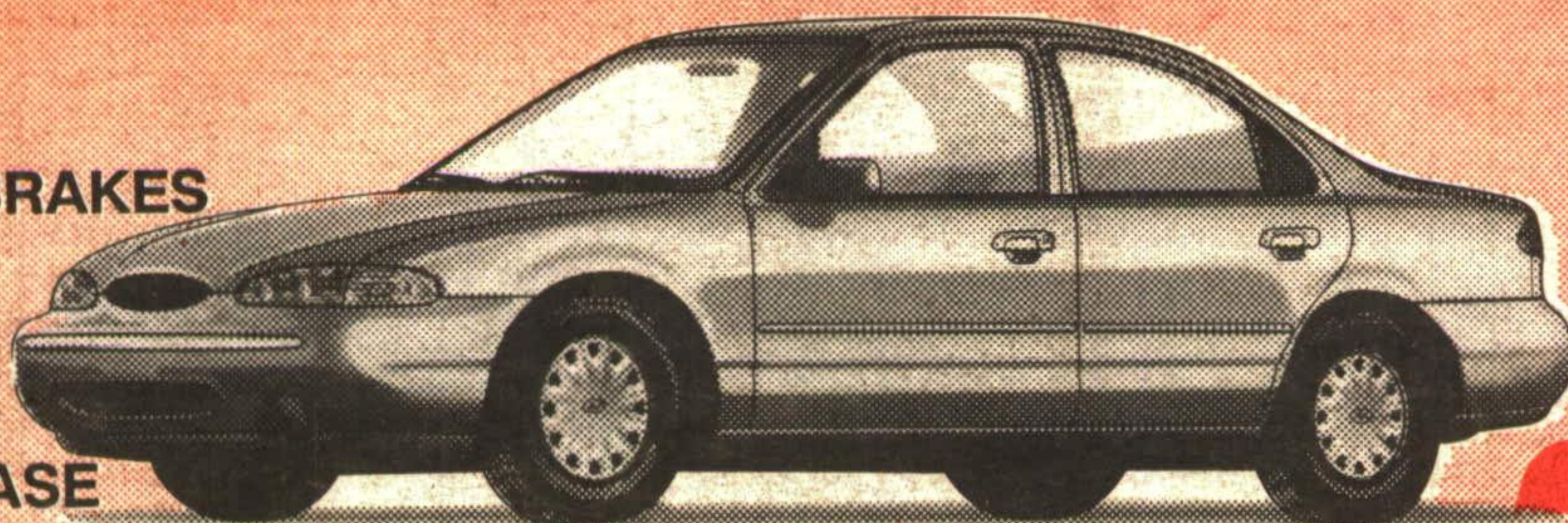


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## GREEN THUMB GARDENING



By CHRISTINE COLE

### SALT SPRAY DAMAGE

Huge quantities of salt are used each winter to keep roads and sidewalks clear of snow and ice. Unfortunately, most of it ends up in the soil or on plants. And salt is a real enemy of shrubs, trees and evergreens. Usually it isn't the salt content in the soil from runoff, but the salt spray and drift that is whipped up by traffic that does the damage to plants.

The amount of damage to plants from salt can vary due to a number of factors. The primary consideration is the distance from the roadway. Salt injury to plants decreases the further they are away from the road. In addition, slower prevailing winds, traffic speed and volume will reduce the amount of salt drifting to plants in the yard.

Also the amount of damage can vary from one species to another. Beech, dogwood, scotch pine, white pine, while cedar and hemlock are all extremely susceptible to salt damage. Other species, however, are quite tolerant to salt and show little injury. Norway maple, horse chestnut, honeylocust, Russian olive, staghorn sumac, burning bush, blue spruce, mugo pine and Austrian pine can all withstand some salt spray and therefore should be considered for planting close to the road to block the salt spray from more sensitive species.

Salt damage to sensitive species is characteristic and specific. Plants are damaged most severely on the side facing the road giving the plant a one-sided appearance, but the branches near the base that have been covered are not damaged. Evergreens do not show signs of damage until early spring, and get worse as summer approaches. At this time the needle tips turn brown. This burnt appearance may extend along the branches to the trunk.

Deciduous trees and shrubs do not exhibit their damage until they begin to leaf out in the spring. However, the buds on the exposed side are usually late in opening or they may not develop at all. If the leaves do develop, it is usually at the base of a branch, resulting in a 'tufting' appearance.

The most effective solution to preventing salt damage to plants is to select species that are resistant to salt spray. Planted close to the road, they will protect the more sensitive species in your yard. Otherwise, a physical barrier made from burlap or wood should be erected to provide some protection. Salt is only one of many environmental factors which cause injury and death to plants, but with a little thought and planning, the effects can be greatly reduced.

For information on our gardening classes, please contact the Garden Centre at 853-2480.

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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