

Home & Garden

The place to find expert help and quality products for home, lawn and garden!

Treat your home and yard to a makeover

You know that yard down the street you've always admired? The one that looks like it belongs in a magazine? You can create this great look, too.

A good start to your makeover is as simple as adding a shrub or two. Shrubs can pull together your entire yard, hiding unattractive areas and giving it a finished look. Shrubs offer a splendid variety of shapes and sizes, beautiful blossoms, colourful berries, and attractive foliage. Try a globe cedar or variegated dogwood to cover an un-

sightly concrete foundation. A creeping juniper strategically placed will provide a soft transition from the hard lines of your house to your yard.

Whatever type you choose, shrubs are a small investment that will add instant value to your home and enhance your garden for years. So, take a few minutes before planting or transplanting to provide for their long-term health by properly preparing the soil.

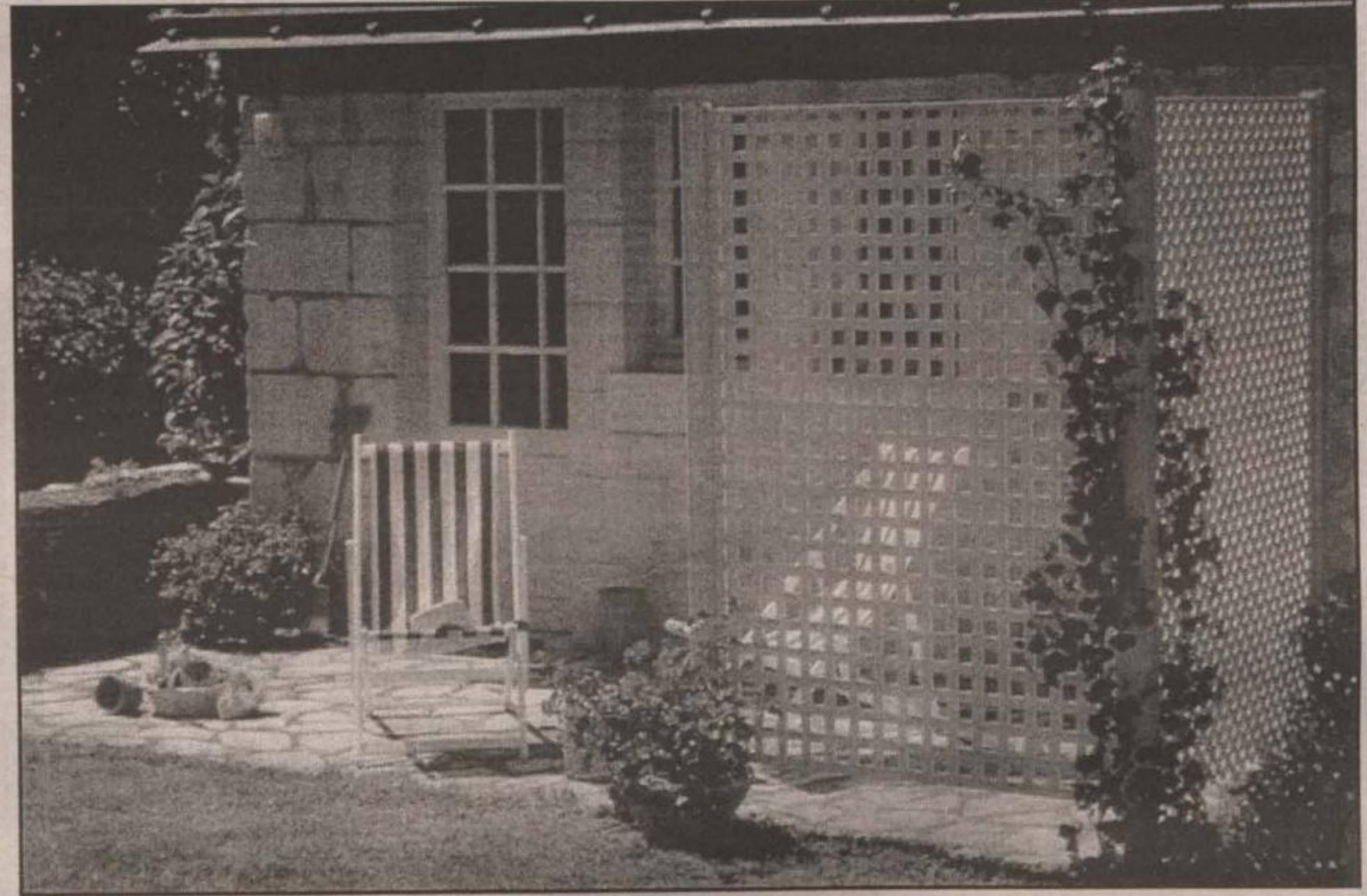
The best way to do this is by using Canadian sphagnum peat moss - a natural

soil conditioner with a unique cell structure that creates ideal growing conditions by regulating moisture and air around plant roots and helping to retain the nutrients vital to plant health.

Ready to start planting? Dig a hole three times as wide and just as deep as the shrub's root ball. Angle the sides of the hole outward to 45 degrees, and loosen the bottom soil with a garden fork.

Mix one part peat moss with two parts of the dug-up soil. (If your shrub is a type that prefers acidic soil, like a rhododendron or conifer, use one part peat moss to one part soil.) Remove the shrub's packing material, and prune off any damaged or rotted roots. Place the shrub in the planting hole, ensuring that its trunk is straight. Backfill with the soil and peat-moss mixture and lightly pack.

Water well, then wait about 15 minutes for the water to soak in and the soil to settle. If necessary, add more soil mixture, but don't



You can make your home look as good as the ones in gardening magazines by adding the right mixture of plants, shrubs, stones and other touches.

backfill above the shrub's bark line.

Using the remaining soil mixture, build a rim, like a saucer, encircling the planting hole, and then mulch the inside area. This helps to hold water where it is

needed most. Water your new shrub twice a week for a month after planting and enjoy the new look.

What to look for in a new tractor

Shopping for the right tractor for your yard can be confusing. There are many brands and, at first glance, they seem similar. A tractor is an investment that should last for years. Experts recommend going beyond the shiny paint to compare the design, features and quality of different models by asking these questions.

Ask about the design and manufacture of the tractor to assess its quality and durability. To assure longevity, look for all steel construction, including the hood. Also, check the tractor's frame design. For maximum durability, look for a channel frame design, welded for added strength. Different gauges of steel support critical stress areas, making a channel frame more rugged than the single-piece stamped frame usually found on less-expensive units.

There are three keys to a great cut: the mowing deck, the turning radius and the traction. Examine how the mowing deck is mounted on the tractor. Look for an axle-mounted mowing deck that "floats" freely, adjusting to

changes in terrain. Thick deck mounting system follows the contours of your yard, reducing scalping and providing a smooth, even cut.

Another sign of a great cut is the ability to manicure around landscaping, minimizing the trimming required after mowing. Look for a tractor with a tight turning radius to complete the job efficiently, one that's capable of mowing around trees and shrubs in one pass.

Finally, just like a car, look for features that improve traction. Good traction ensure that the tractor's wheels will not slip when climbing steep inclines or mowing wet, slippery areas.

Your best assurance that the tractor you select will meet your needs, and continue to work for you into the future, is to buy it from a knowledgeable local, servicing dealer. A dealer has the ability to counsel and advise about a number of lines and knows which companies provide the best parts service. He will have a well-stocked inventory of service parts and accessories.

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