

Do your outdoor maintenance before Old Man Winter arrives

This is the time to protect your lawn and plants from the frost and snow. Some fertilizing and soil preparation will also save you time and extra work come spring.

Cleaning up your garden not only makes it look tidier, it promotes healthy soil and thriving plants in spring.

- Rake fallen leaves from the lawn — these can smother grass as they get wet and mat down, encouraging disease and pest problems in spring.

- Sprinkle a bit of fertilizer over some of the leaves and till these into the soil to enrich it come spring.

- Keep your lawn short as winter approaches to ensure it doesn't mat down.

- Remove and dispose of all plant debris that has been diseased or attacked by pests to discourage overwintering of insect eggs and plant disease organisms.

- Toss only plant debris that is disease and pest free into your compost.

- If you haven't done so in at least five years, have your soil tested for pH and fertilizer needs. The best time to add sulphur or lime to the soil to adjust its pH is now.

- Fertilizing your lawn in late fall promotes healthy root growth and builds food reserves. Although top growth has stopped, roots will keep growing at temperatures above 0 degrees Celsius.

- Perennials can be damaged by severe cold and freeze/thaw cycles. Ones that you have recently planted, or that are marginally hardy in your area, need special care. In areas

where temperatures drop below 0 degrees Celsius, it's not a bad idea to mulch all perennials. You may also want to wait until spring to cut them back since the dead foliage helps trap snow, protecting plants over the winter.

- In late fall, cover perennials with a loose mulch of hay, straw or evergreen boughs. Leaves are not recommended because they become matted when wet and won't trap air to properly insulate the soil. Remove mulch gradually in spring as the weather warms up.

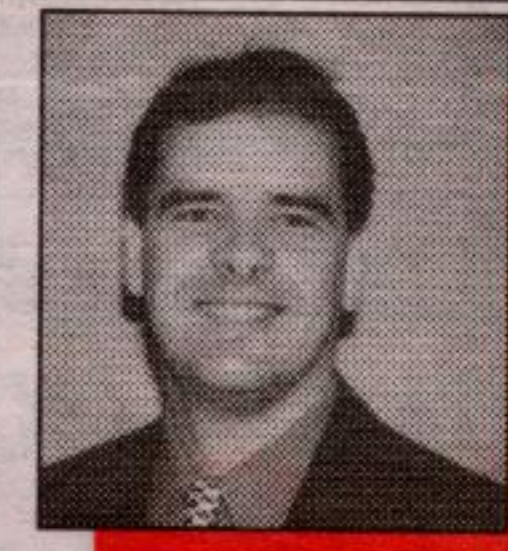
- Some plants need more than root protection over the winter, while others thrive on neglect. You'll know which ones need more pampering by their appearance in spring. Foliage, for example, on some evergreens such as yew, hemlock and rhododendrons, is prone to browning or bleaching from winter sun and wind burn. Some sprays are available to coat sensitive foliage and prevent winter burn.

- Thoroughly water the soil before the ground freezes — evergreens lose moisture through their foliage all winter.

- Use burlap or similar material to form an open-top barrier around sensitive shrubs that will protect them while letting air and light through.

- Prop evergreen boughs against or over shrubs to protect them from wind and sun and to catch more snow.

- If you must move the plants indoors fast because of frost, provide a consistent source of light and place the pots on a dish of gravel mixed with water to provide steady moisture.



Michael Baron* Sales Representative

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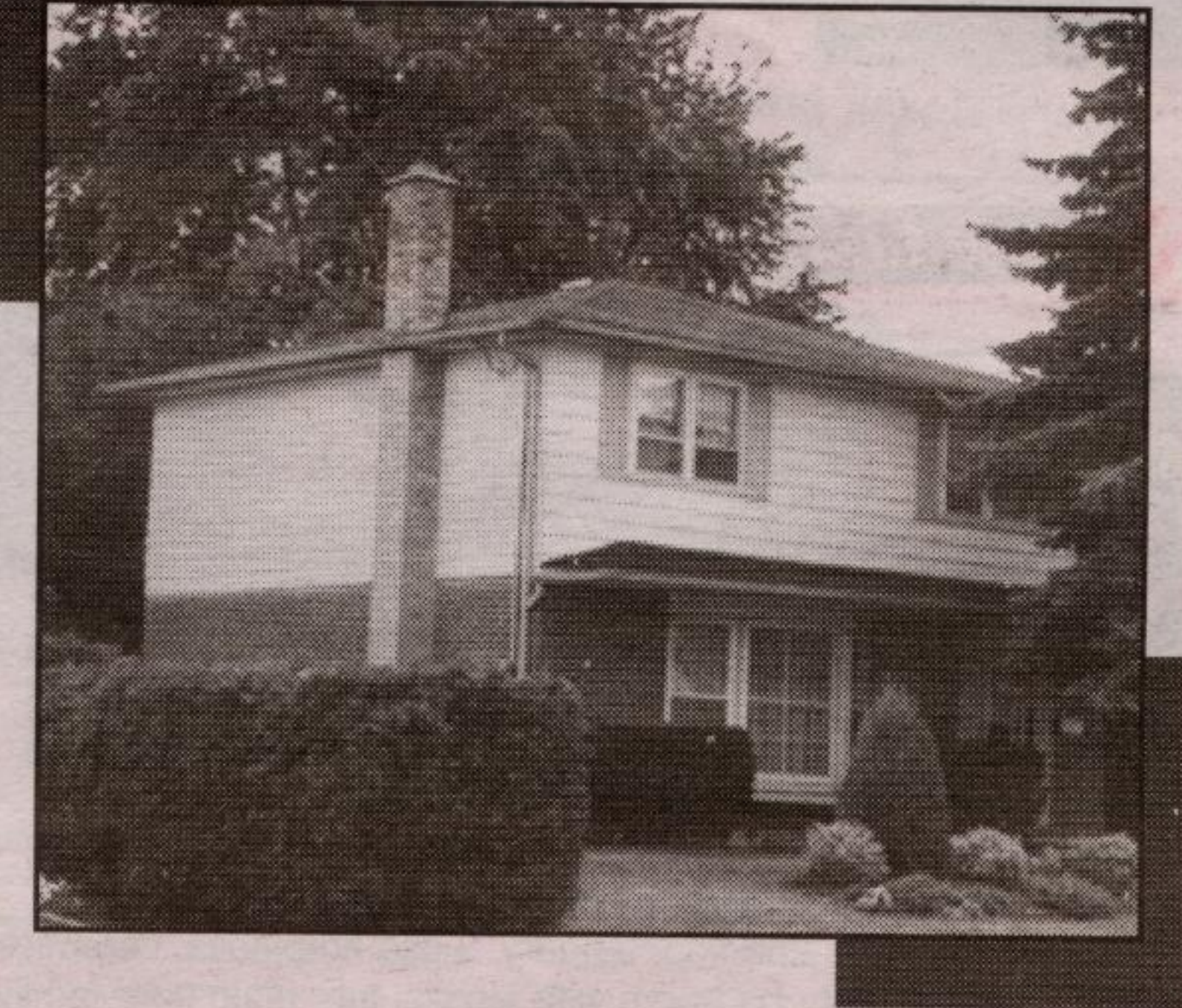
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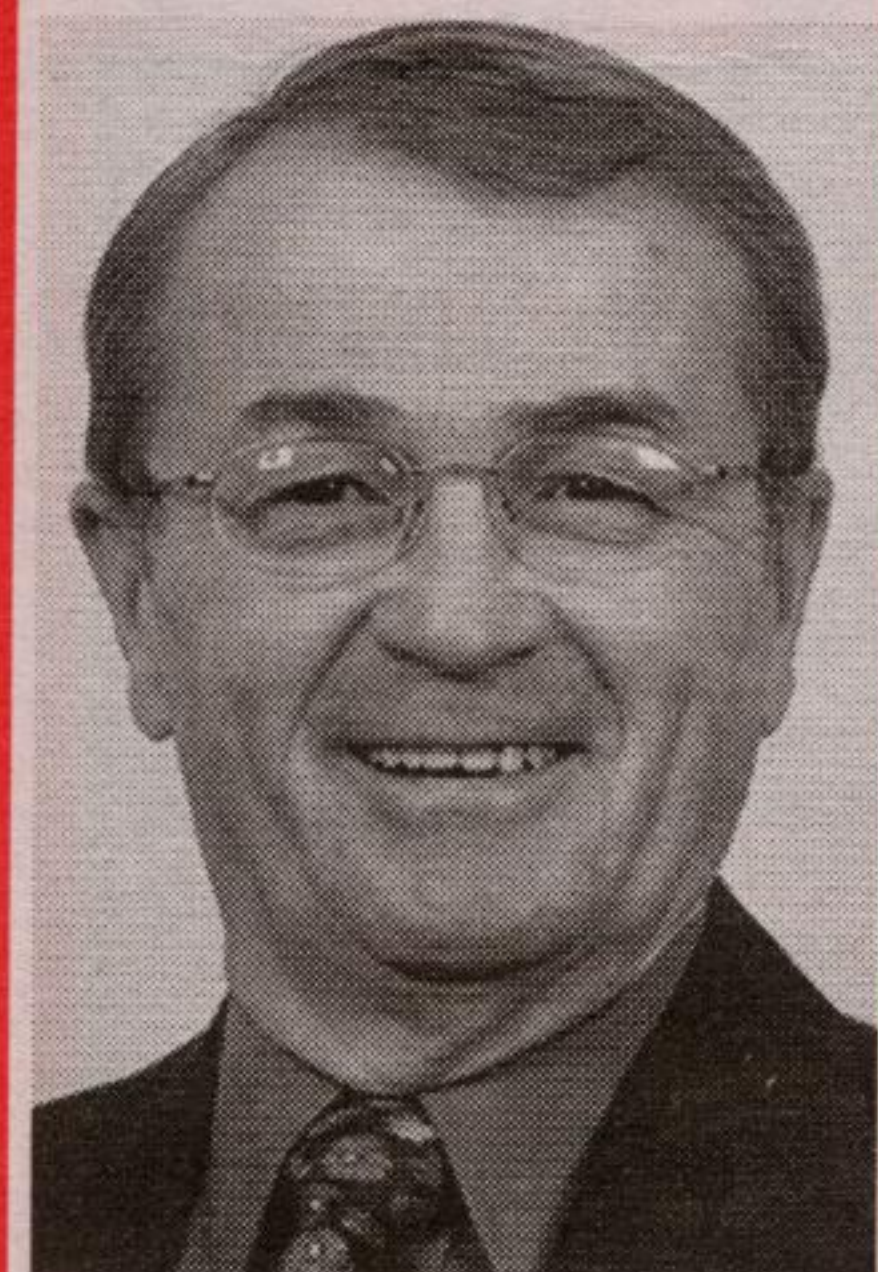
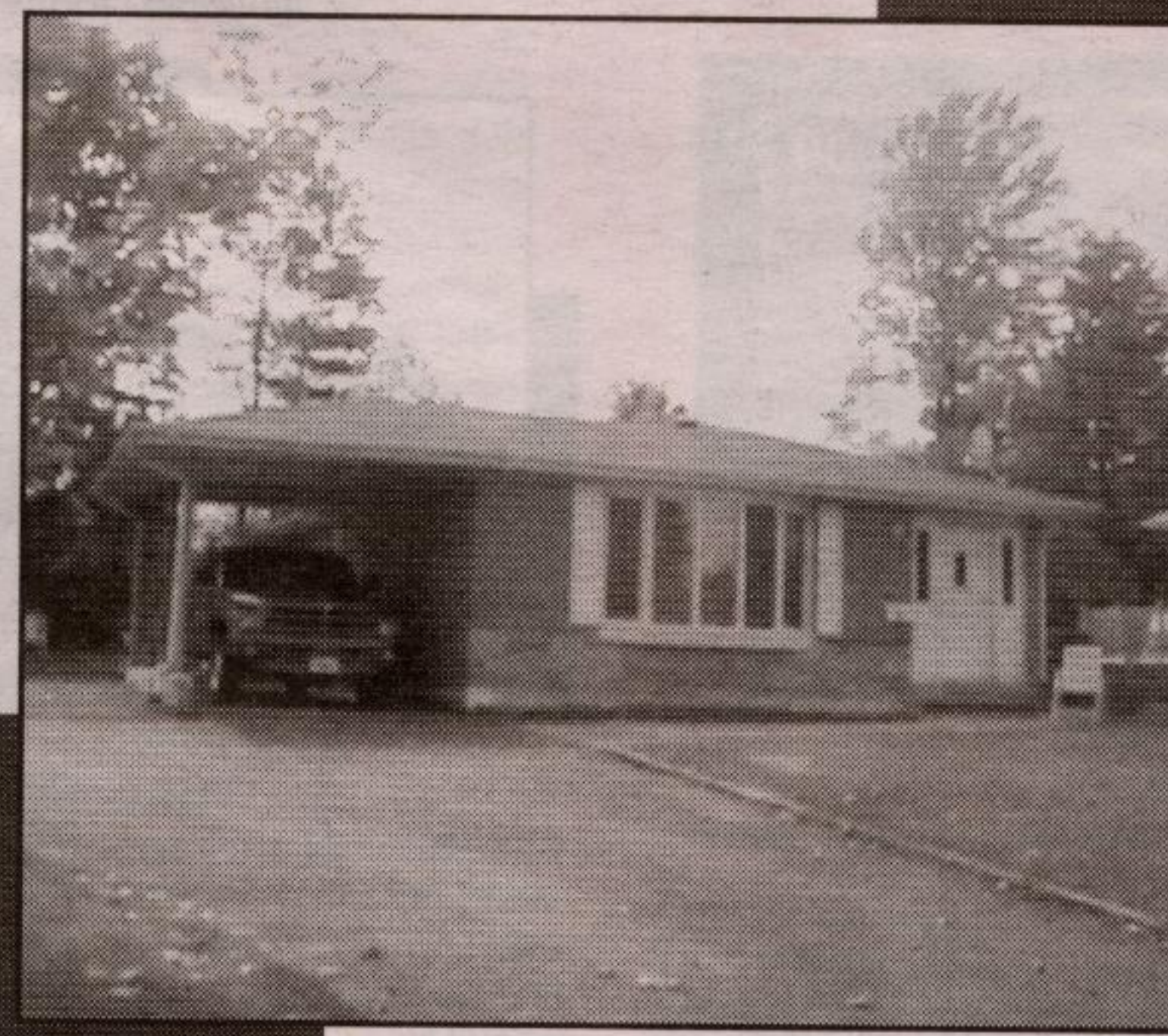
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