

# Gardening? You do the math

Imagine you wake to the most beautiful day of the spring. You have been planning a section of the garden to be planted with annuals, top dressed with your favorite fragrant mulch, and to sod an area that the dog has dug up.

You visit the local garden centre and purchase the items to begin your labour of love. The day has been glorious! The dog and children are with your spouse and neighbours offer margaritas and barbecue. You feel that you have the groove on, and you realize that you do not have enough annuals, sod or mulch. It is 5 p.m. on a Sunday. You are dirty, smelly, and tipsy from the three margaritas consumed earlier that afternoon. The garden centre will be closed in one hour and your spouse is not home to drive you to pick up the items required to finish the day's project.

Does this scenario seem familiar? For many of us, this has already happened. I have learned my lesson and have devoted this article to ensure all who reads it will avoid this situation. You will recognize the following equations from high school algebra. We will apply them to real life gardening questions. I can hear all high school math teachers saying, "I told you so!"

## Volume

Rectangle: Length x Width x Depth

Round  $3.14 \times 2(\text{Radius}) \times \text{Depth}$

Triangle: Base x Depth x Height

## Area

Square: Width x Length

Triangle: Base x Height

Circle:  $3.14 \times 2(\text{radius})$

Volume equations are used in gardening when determining how much mulch, topsoil, gravel, water, and peat moss are needed.

How much soil will I need to raise an existing flower bed 5 inches? The flowerbed is rectangular, 10ft long by 5ft wide.

First, we must convert all the numbers into same type of measurement.

5 inches = 0.417ft.

Now we can add our measurements into the equation.

Length x Width X Depth = Volume of soil we need.

$10\text{ft} \times 5\text{ft} \times 0.417\text{ft} = 20.85$  cubic ft.

Soil is sold in bulk by the cubic yard or in bags by kilo. Convert the 20.85 cubic ft into the appropriate measurement. With this information, you can compare prices too.

Area equations are used in gardening when determining how many plants, sod, seed, or fertilizer an area needs.

How many rolls of sod will I need to sod a rectangular area 10 ft long and 5 ft wide?

Add our numbers into the equation.

Length x Width = Area of sod needed

$10\text{ft} \times 5\text{ft} = 50$  square ft

The area of one roll of sod is 8 square ft.

$50$  square ft /  $8$  square ft = 6.25 rolls of sod, or 7 rolls of sod needed.

To plan your garden before spring, you must consider more than just choosing the prettiest flowers or most delicious vegetables. Draw a small sketch of the yard with measurements. You can use this plan to decide how many flowers, vegetables, seed, fertilizer, soil, stone, wood, fencing, water—and the list goes on—you will need. Know this before you go to the garden centre, and have fun shopping!

—Article provided by CW Horticulture, Georgetown

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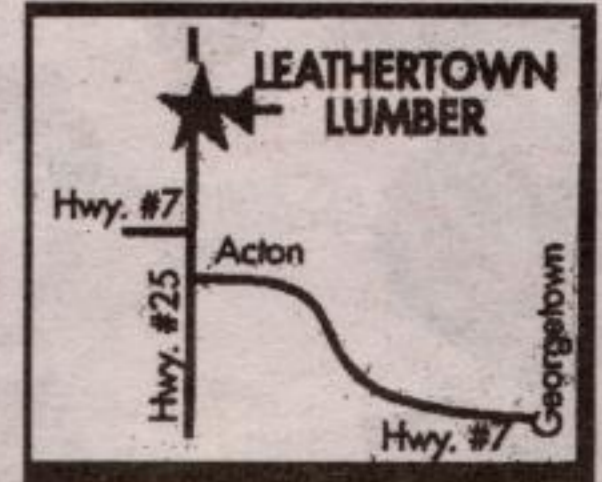
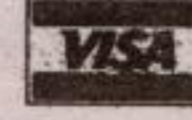
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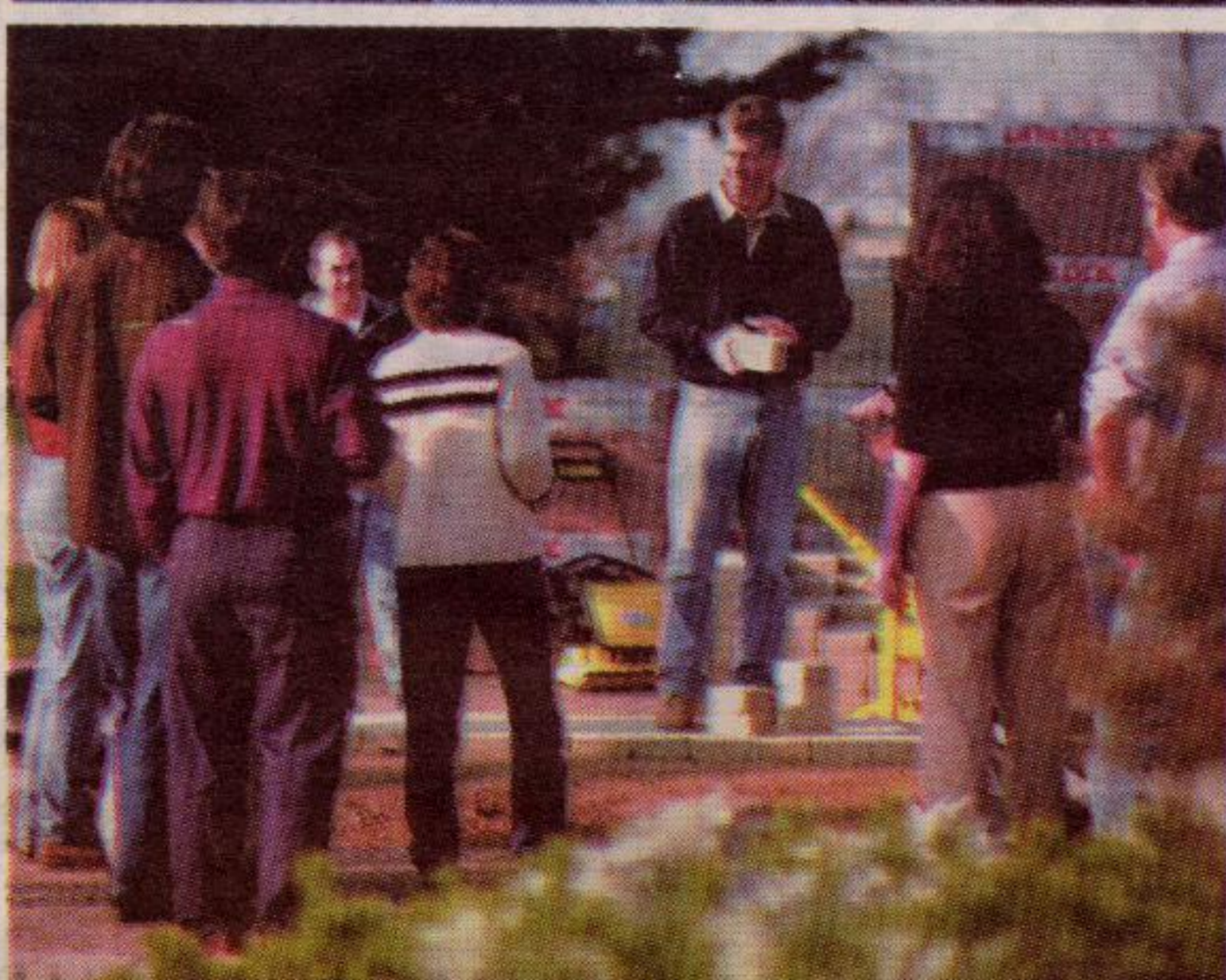
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