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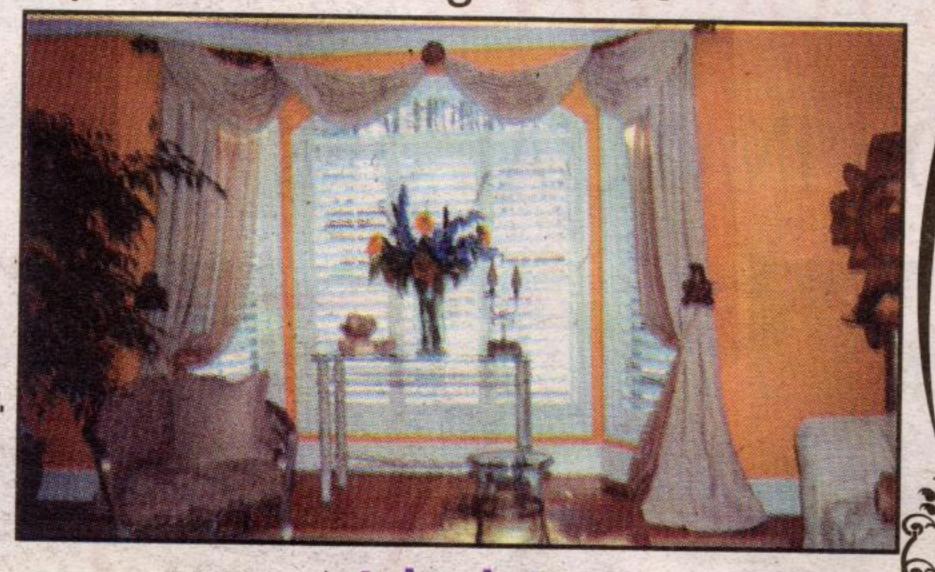
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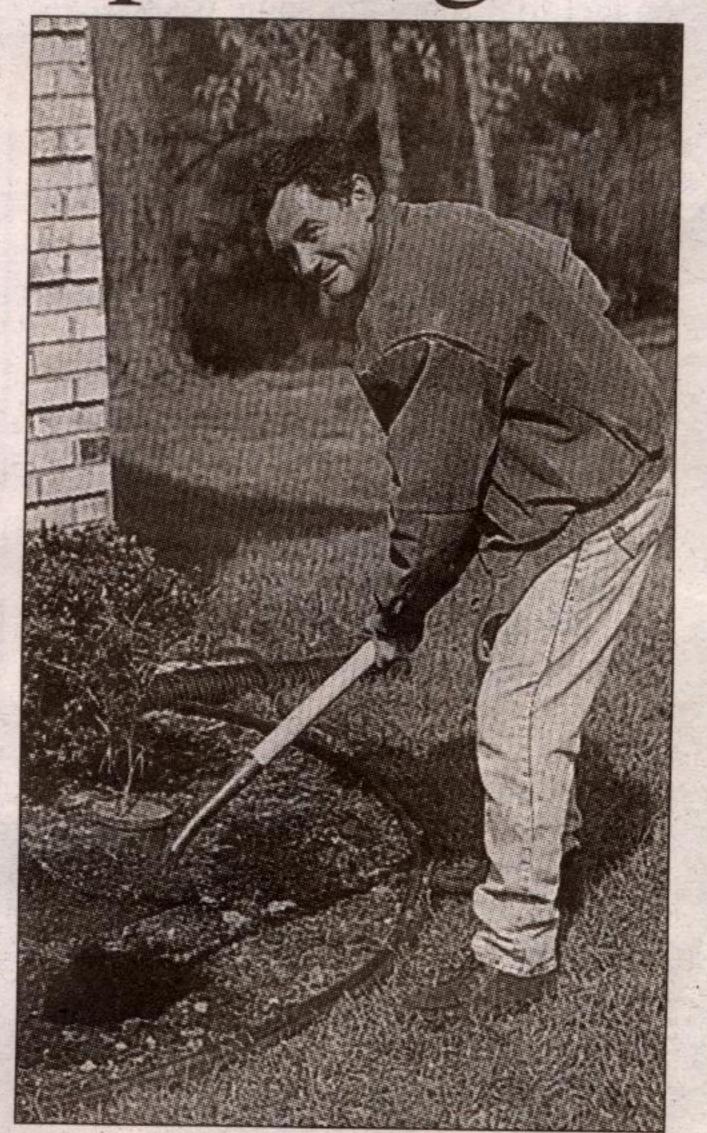
# The gardener's secret—backyard composting

posting transforms garbage into Black Gold—rich, fragrant earth that plants thrive in. The best part is that it's easy!

Composting can be as simple as piling leaves and grass clippings in a corner of the yard and waiting for the pile to decompose. If you want your finished compost ready faster, there are ways to speed things up. A plastic container in a sunny, sheltered spot will help, as will chopping up the composting materials. A pile that's really cooking will be roughly half "green" and half "brown" materials by weight. Green includes fruit and vegetable peelings, fresh grass clippings, coffee grounds, tea leaves and weeds. Brown includes fallen leaves, wood ash, corncobs, coffee filters and dry grass. Avoid meat, dairy products or pet waste in your composter.

Mix the pile occasionally with a garden fork, and pour a little water in when dry. Work fresh food waste into the pile or throw leaves or dirt on top to avoid flies and smells. Watch out for Walnut leaves. They're plentiful here in Halton Hills, but they contain a toxin poisonous to other plants.

You'll know it's done when you can't recognize the original materials and it has a lovely scent, like the forest floor. That's the time to dig it into your garden and enjoy!



Halton Region offers a handy Home Composting Wheel packed with information and tips. Call Access Halton at 1-866-442-5866.

-By Kathy Dorbeck, HOPE (Healthy Options for People and the Environment). HOPE is a Halton Hills citizens grassroots organization promoting healthy gardening practices.

## WANTED

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