

# Rock gardens require careful planning

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Many gardeners have visions of a beautiful rock garden as soon as they see a slope or a terraced situation. Their visions are usually very realistic, but here realism often stops. They do not take into account the work required to develop and maintain the site. Nothing looks worse than a poorly planned and poorly maintained rock garden.

Site selection is the most important decision to make once you have decided to plant a rock garden. Well-drained locations are a necessity. If drainage is poor, a

gravel and stone base should be provided.

Rock gardens should also blend with the surrounding terrain. For instance, a mound of stone and earth in the middle of a flat front yard is not a good choice of location. It will always look like a mound of dirt. Blend your rock garden into the surroundings, so it will look like a natural part of the overall scene.

Most plant material used in rock gardens comes from mountains, and this is the type of a scene that gardeners are trying to imitate in their yards. When planning your rock garden, try to picture how this would look in natural surroundings.

There are many "do's" and "don'ts" in rock

garden construction. For detailed advice consult the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food publication, "Rock Gardens", (publication

No. 38). This free publication is available from local agricultural offices, or by writing to the Information Branch, Ontario Ministry of Agri-

culture and Food, Legislative Buildings, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A5.

There are also many fine reference books on the subject, available in soft cover editions at your local book stores and libraries. English gardeners have developed rock gardening into a fine art, and publications from that country are particularly informative.

Practically any low-growing plant material can be used in a rockery. Both deciduous and evergreen shrubs, and many hundred of herbaceous perennials, can be used effectively. Unfortunately, rock gardening is a very specialized form of gardening, and enthusiasts must look far and wide for many of the choice plants, such as dryas, dracocephalum, erigeron, and helianthemum. However, the backbone of any rockery is the moss phloxes, sedums, houseleeks (Hens and Chickens), candy-tuft, perennial alyssum and thymes. These are readily available at most garden centres.

## Vegetables at home . . .

(Continued from pg. 7)  
Every other watering, use the fertilizer-water combination at half-strength.

Don't over-fertilize your garden, especially tomatoes, once the plants are established, or they will produce too much vegetative growth and not enough fruit. If you don't have a compost pile, dig the tops of radishes, carrots, onions and so on, back into the ground. It's not the best way of composting, but it's better than tossing them out.

Vegetables grown in a

home garden have unequalled flavor because you pick them at the peak of freshness and taste. It makes planting even a few vegetables very worthwhile. To help plan your vegetable garden, obtain Publication 536, Vegetable Garden Requirements, from your local office of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Parliament Buildings, Toronto, M7A 1A5.

A few herbs are also a welcome addition to the garden. Plant them in the foundation areas of rockery.

## Grow annuals from seed

By **R. A. Fleming**  
Horticultural Research  
Institute of Ontario

Petunias, Marigolds, Zinnias, Impatiens, Begonias and Geraniums—we all buy one, some, or all of them as young plants each year for the next best thing to an instant garden. There is no question such plants are colorful, but many less common ones can be just as exciting to grow and just as colorful in the garden.

For a dollar or two for a few packets of seed, a very interesting and colorful garden can be created. Try Calendula, Bachelor's Buttons or Cornflower, Coreopsis, Cosmos or Nasturtium. Less well known annuals that grow successfully from seed are Baby's Breath, Nemophila, Scabiosa, Nemesia and vines such as Morning Glory, Sweet Pea and Thunbergia, the Clock Vine.

With the exception of Sweet Peas, which should be planted as early in the spring as the soil can be prepared, most annuals can be sown from early to mid May. This gives adequate time for germination of the seed during the moderate temperatures of mid to late May. It also gives plants the good growing weather of June, July and August when these annuals will flower.

Sow the seed thinly on a well-prepared, moist seed bed. Cover the seed lightly and keep the seed bed moist until the seedlings have emerged. Thin young seedlings, removing weak or overcrowded plants to avoid unnecessary competition. Further thinning may be required as the plants grow, but young plants from this operation may be transplanted to open areas of the garden in much the same way as boxed plants.

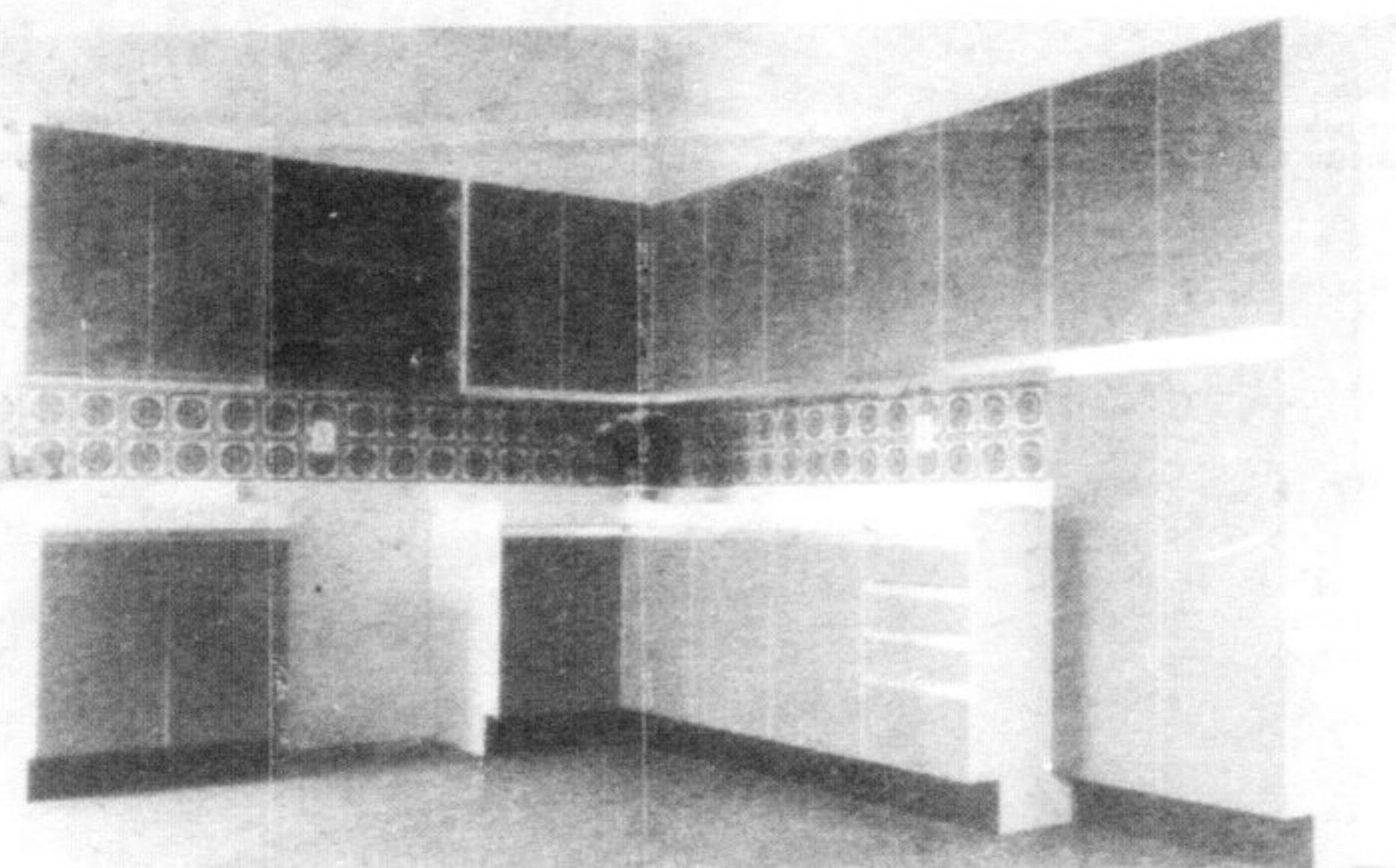
Annuals allowed to go to seed often stop flowering. Removal of spent or faded flowers encourages new flowering shoots.

Don't rely entirely on the usual Petunias and Geraniums for garden colour this year. Try a few annuals from seed and increase the variety of annual plants and their flower form and color in your garden.



LOCAL STORES are well stocked with all the tools you need to do your home gardening this season. This is a partial view of the gardening section at Home Hardware, Steeles Ave.

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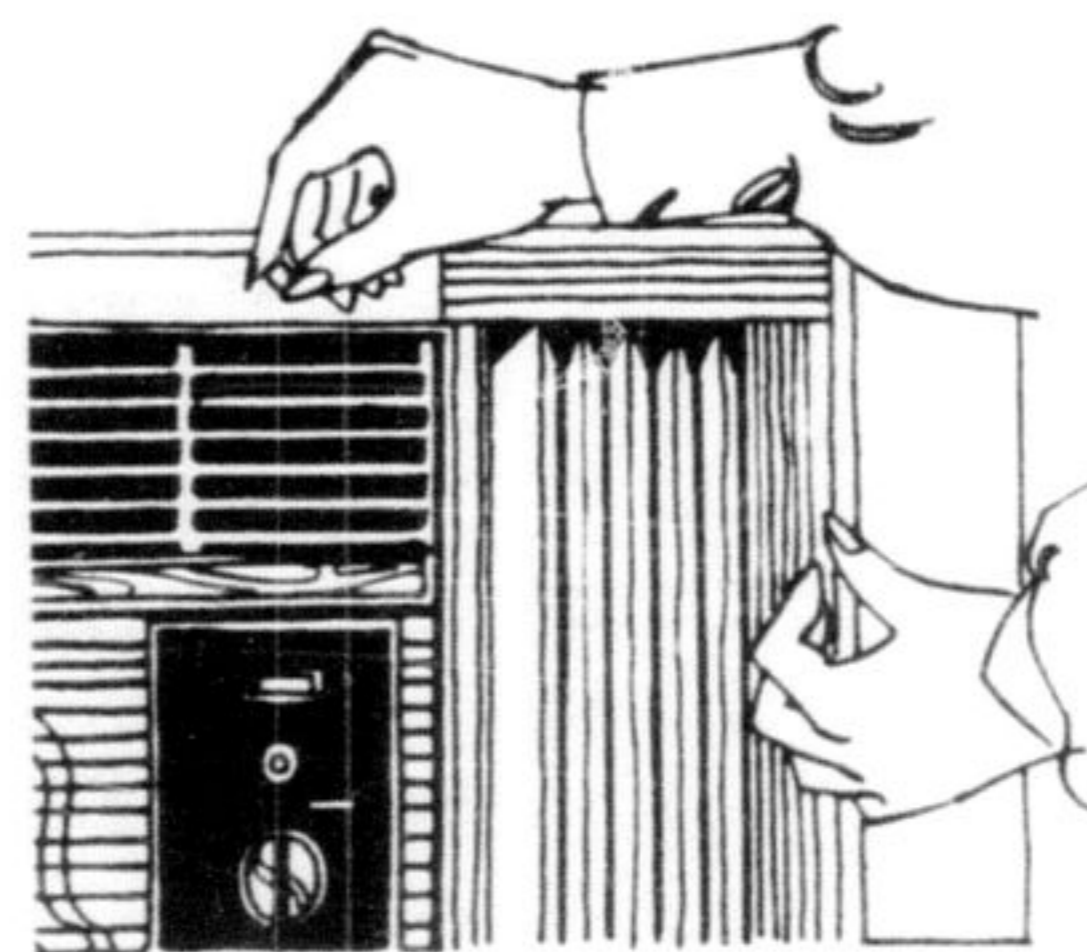
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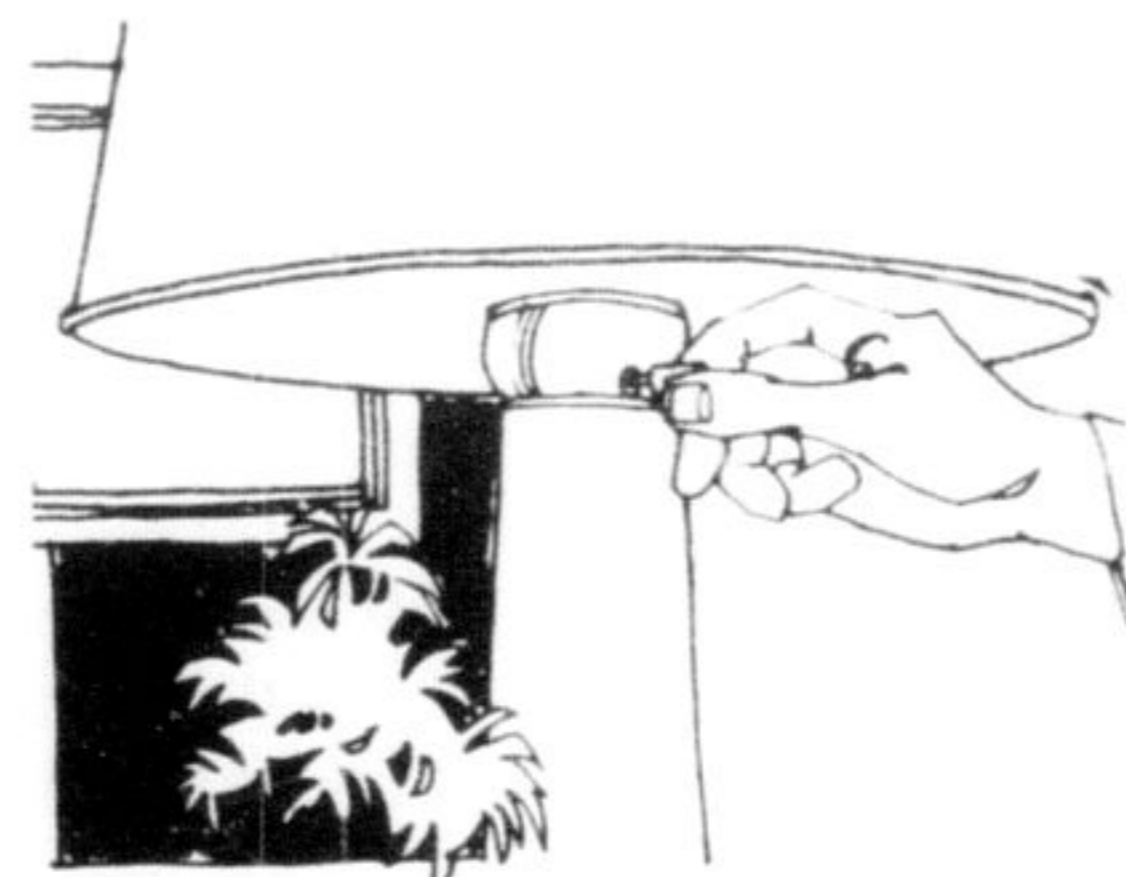
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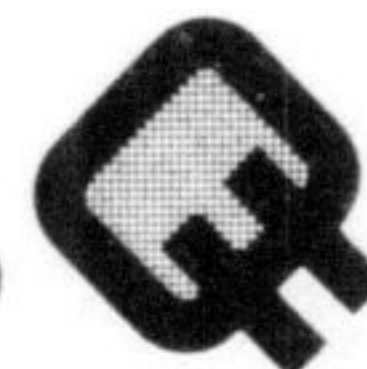


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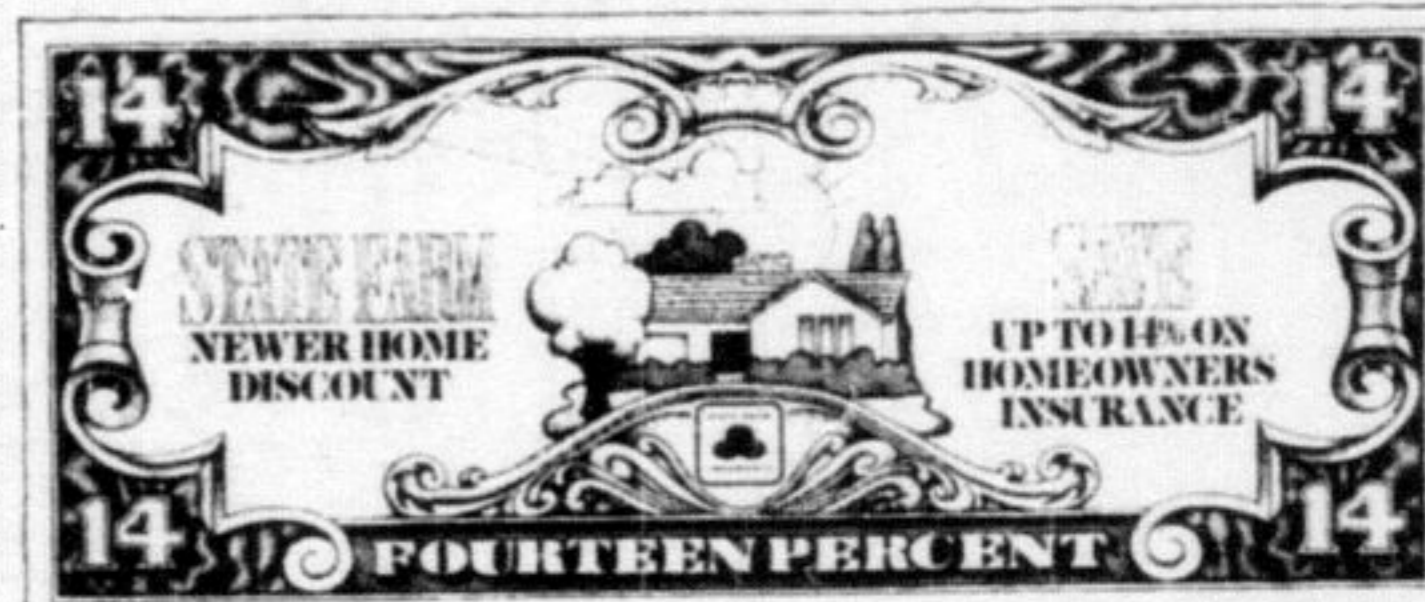
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