

Home & GARDEN LAWN & GARDEN

A natural approach to keeping water gardens clear and healthy

By Bruno Petosa

(NC)—Remember "If you build it, they will come" from Field of Dreams?

The famous line is certainly relevant when it comes to building the perfect backyard water world the natural way.

In water gardening, if you create the right conditions, good things like clear and healthy water, along with birds, dragonflies and many other members of nature's family, will come.

Like one of North America's favourite pastimes, the winning strategy to water gardening au naturel is to cover all the bases.

It begins with proper water circulation. Water should always be in

motion to avoid problems associated with stagnation. Circulating pumps with magnetic driven impellers—not the oil-based ones—do the job without harming the environment.

Adding a waterfall or fountain feature improves your chances of success by replenishing the oxygen in pond water, which is great for fish.

Next up, filtration. Pond filters break down or mechanically remove debris and fish waste. They also harbor friendly bacteria required to keep organic toxins at bay.

Putting natural products like barley straw and peat granules inside a filter improves the odds of control-



ling or preventing the growth of algae. Also make sure the filter is clear of debris and working to full capacity.

Water gardens should also be teeming with a good balance of aquatic plants.

Oxygenating plants, for instance, help keep a biological balance, limit the growth of algae, and provide oxygen for fish and other livestock.

For ponds in sunny areas, 50% to 60% of the water surface should be covered with plants. If it's in a shady area or receives shade from trees, the amount of plant coverage can be reduced.

Floating plants, like water

hyacinth and water lettuce, provide shade and help reduce the development of sun-loving algae, while deep water plants, including water lilies, produce beautiful pads that help prevent algae-conducive daylight from penetrating deep into the pond.

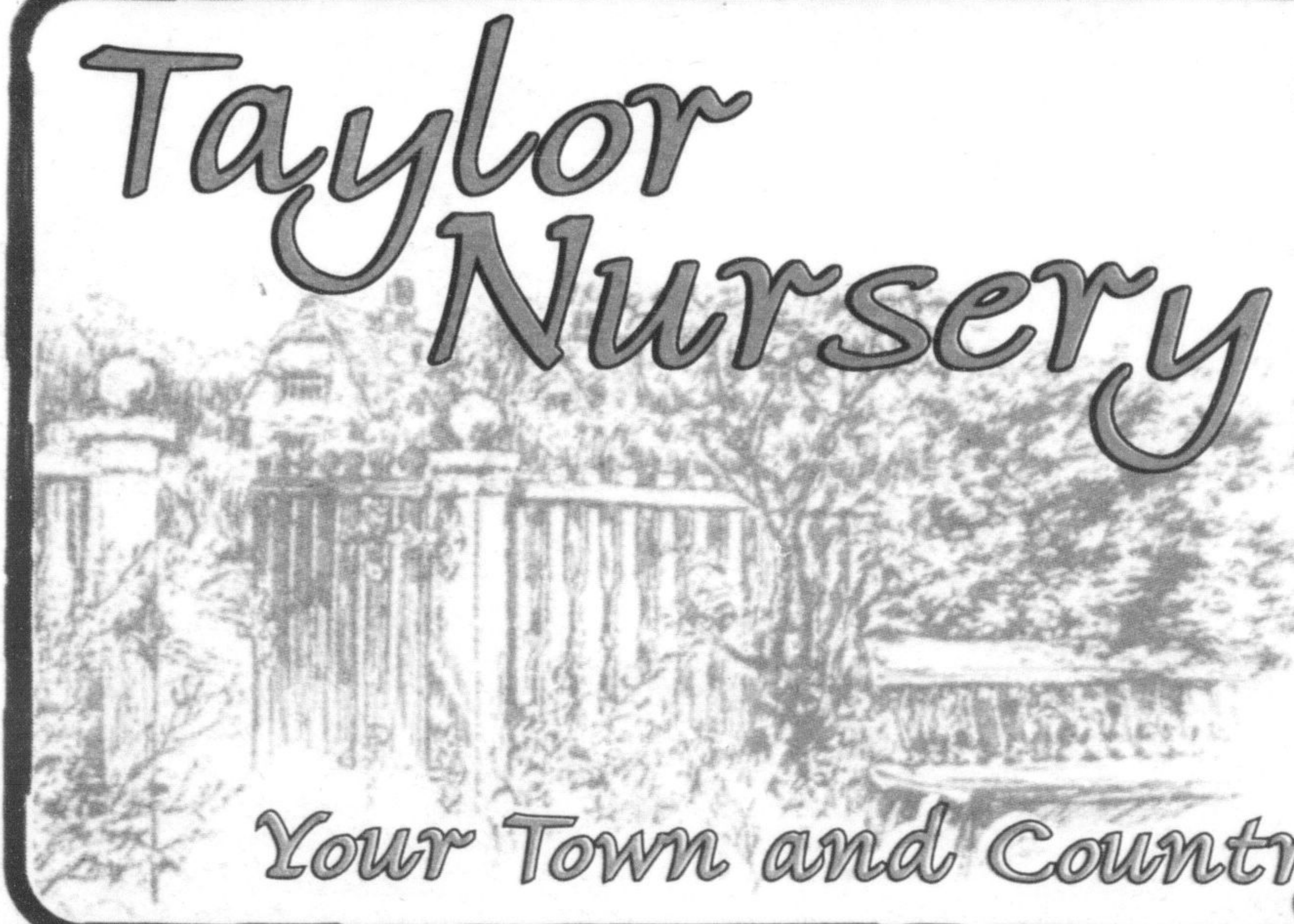
If fish is in your game plan, stock the appropriate amount and feed them quality fish food with highly digestible formulations that do not cloud water and limit organic waste.

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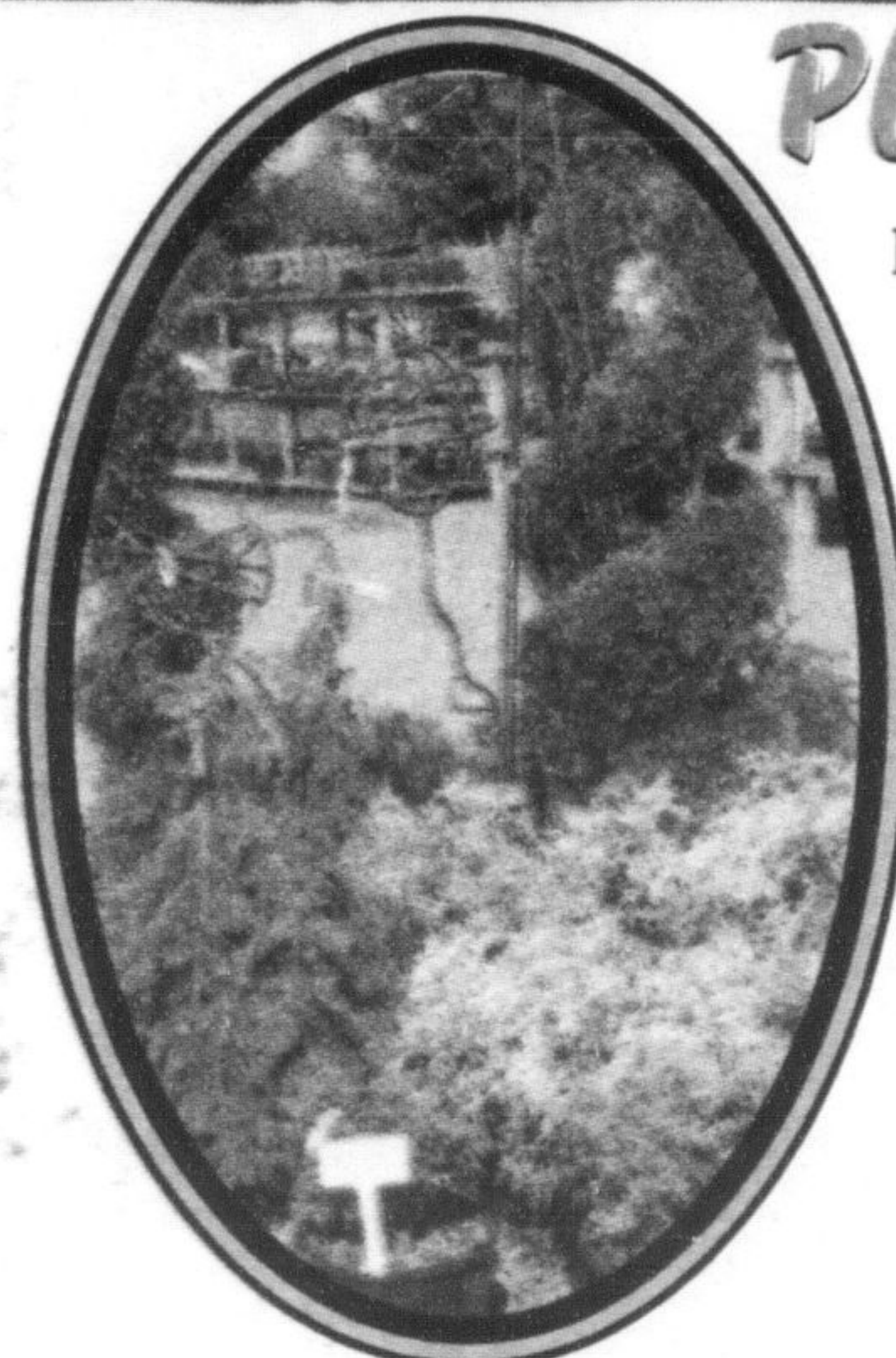
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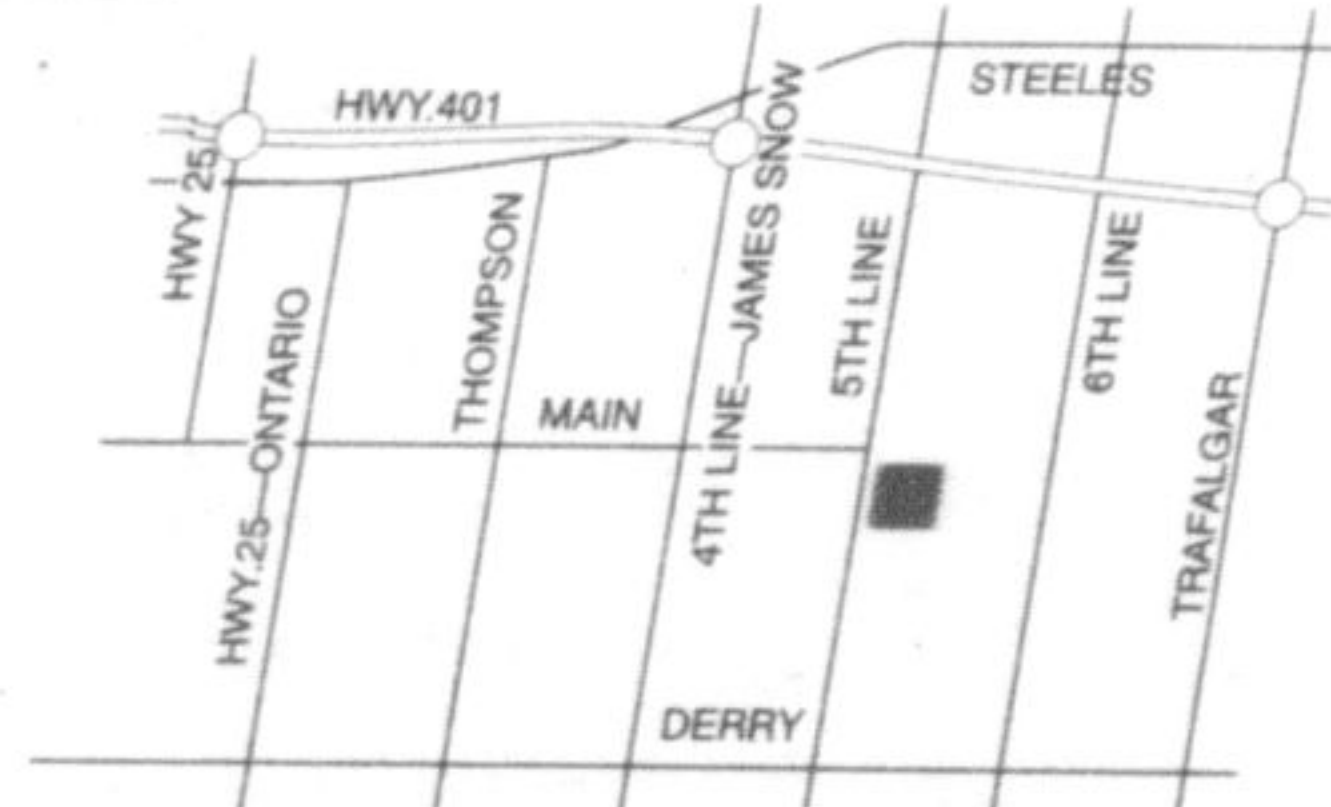
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