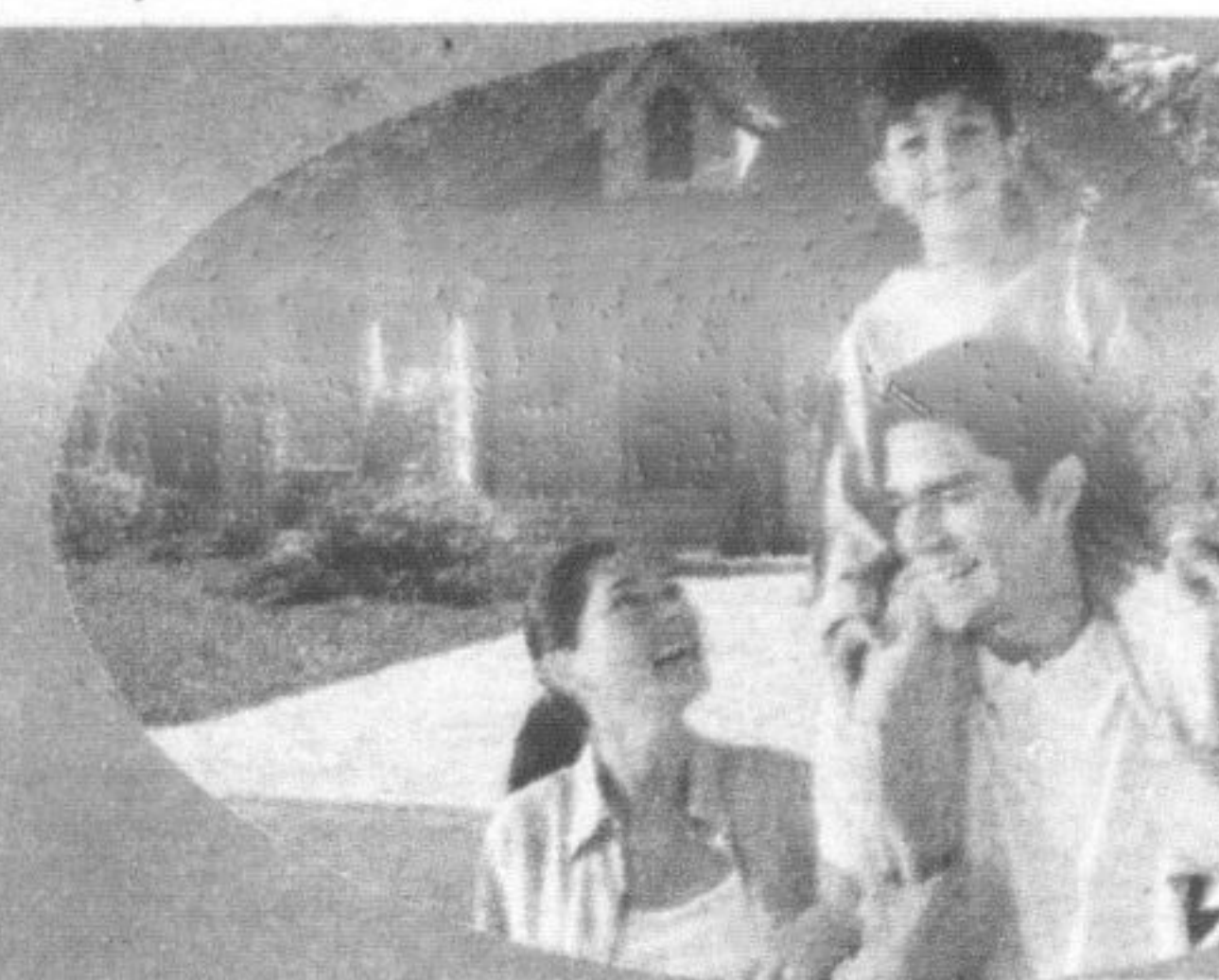


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Simple Landscape Tricks to Increase Curb Appeal

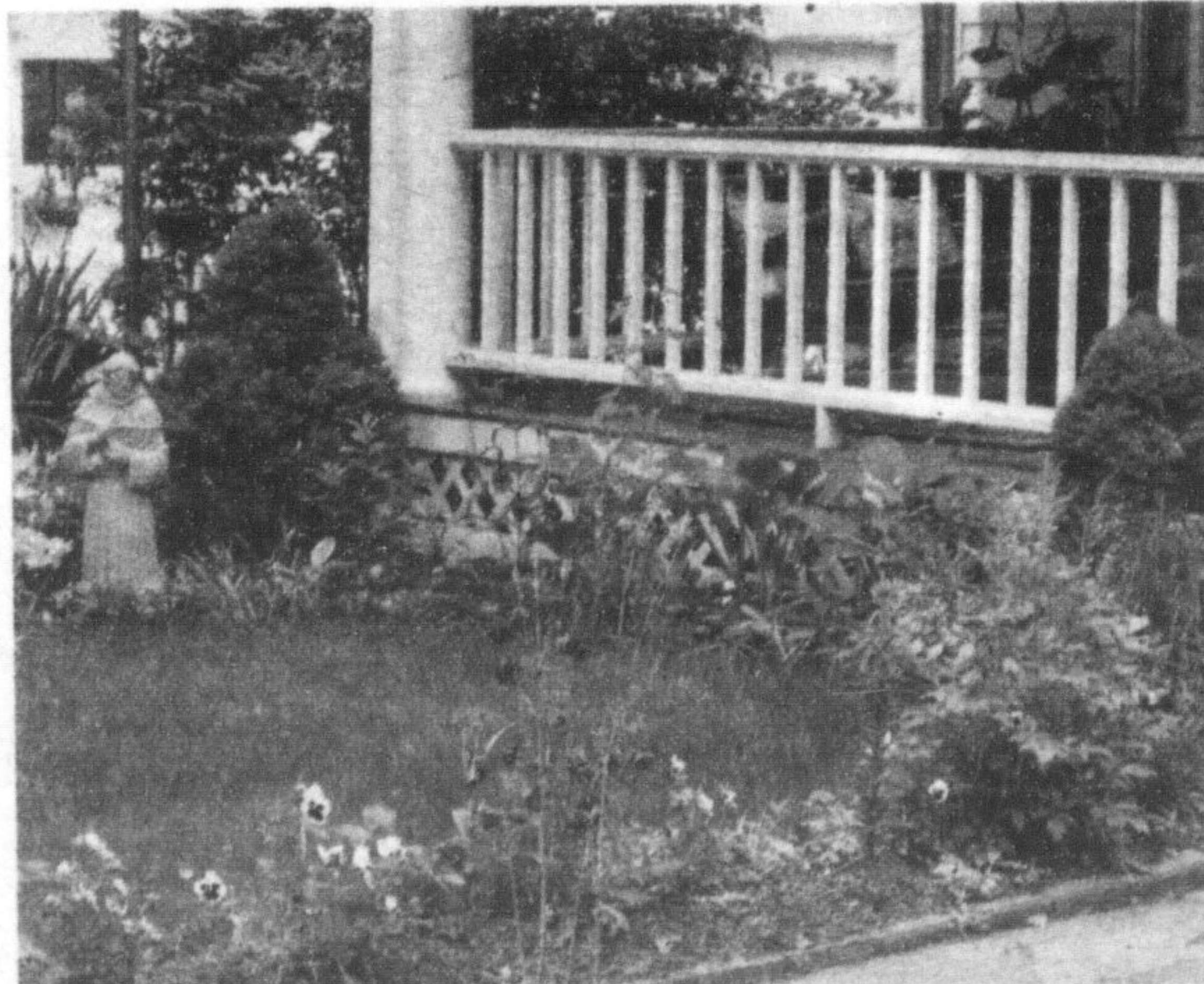
(MS) — These days, the home-improvement industry is as big as it's ever been. Take a casual drive through a typical suburban neighborhood and you're liable to see a fair number of houses undergoing some sort of reclamation project. Be it a new garage door, a fresh coat of paint or the ever-popular add-on, homes across the country are getting more facelifts than an aging Hollywood starlet.

That said, many homeowners are left looking for ways to keep up with the Joneses while not breaking the bank. Thankfully, the answer for a lot of people is right outside their windows. Improving the landscape of a yard doesn't have to be expensive. And such improvements can go a long way to increasing a home's curb appeal, making it more attractive to prospective buyers.

Think Foliage

Upon planting flowers, many homeowners are surprised at the impact those flowers have on the look and feel of their home. Flowerbeds around the perimeter of a house add to the color of a home, while also making it feel more welcoming to guests, including prospective buyers.

A good trick is to plant flowers along the edges of a driveway or walkway. This can provide a strong contrast to a drab driveway or walkway. In addition, such flowers will draw the attention of guests or those in the real estate market, taking their eyes away from potential problem areas you might not be able to fix at the moment.



Plant Trees

If, like many homeowners, you simply don't have the time to keep your lawn looking lush and green throughout the year, consider planting some trees around the property. This is not only environmentally friendly, but effort-friendly as well, as tending to trees is not nearly as time consuming as keeping a lawn in great shape.

Once a tree begins to sprout, envelop its base in a bed of mulch. Mulch only needs to be replenished once per year, and the look it creates is both beautiful and serene. In addition, planting trees is inexpensive. Just make sure you consult with neighbors first if you plan on planting near property lines.

Work On Your Walkways & Surrounding Landscape

Unless you have young children, you and your guests will likely spend more time on walkways and patio decks than you will in the actual yard lawn. Take advantage of that by further lessening the time you spend on the actual grass as a means to keeping it in even better shape. For example, if you have a backyard garden you're especially proud of, install a concrete walkway that leads you and potential visitors back to the garden. This will greatly reduce the amount of wear and tear your lawn takes each time you visit the garden. In addition, a concrete walkway won't be damaged by wheelbarrows full of soil or new plants.

If walkways leading into the home are already lined with foliage, make sure you keep them well-trimmed. Keeping shrubs and bushes well-trimmed doesn't require a lot of effort but does give the impression of a home that's been well cared for. On the other hand, unkempt shrubs and bushes are an eye sore, and can imply a homeowner has been lax in other maintenance areas as well.