



### Ready to go

It's that time again, when we begin to see rows of cut pine trees, ready to be brought into the home and decorated for Christmas.

staff photo

## Growing Christmas trees a family business

by Shirley Whittington  
Last December Marguerite Desrochers of Lafontaine tried a spruce for the family tree. "She didn't like it," reports her husband, Albert Desrochers. "It dried up a couple of days after she brought it into the house."

Mme. Desrochers has ordered a Scotch pine for this Christmas. She won't have to go far to get it. Her husband Albert is one of the largest Christmas tree growers in the area.

For the Desrochers, the tree farm is a family business and they have about 200 acres, planted, mostly in Scotch pine. "Nine people out of ten prefer them," says Albert. "The spruce and balsam may be a little easier to decorate, but they dry out so quickly and become a real fire hazard because they have more gum in them. The pine won't burn nearly as easily."

This year's harvest numbered ten thousand trees. "At one time," says Albert, "there wasn't much money in the business, but now they go at \$3.50 to \$4.50 wholesale and it's worth all the work. Retailers usually double their money, so that means in the city trees will probably sell for seven or eight dollars."

Lafontaine is good tree growing country. The crisp climate has something to do with this and so does the soil. Pines especially like light sandy soil. "Good potato land is good tree land," says Desrochers.

Trees are harvested when they are ten years old. "We used to cut them after five or six years, but pruning has become more important than ever because people want perfectly shaped trees. Of course, each time you prune, you set the tree's growth back, so it takes longer to grow a good tree."

Like any farmer, Desrochers worries about annual threats to his crop. One he calls "gall." "A worm gets into the branch and creates a lump. Usually we have to cup the tree right down. Some fields get really infested with this."

Then there's the root weevil. "These eat away at the roots and the tree turns yellow and dies. It seems to happen more if you plant the same field over the over. It's better to let the land lie idle for four or five years between crops."

The Desrochers work hard at discouraging the harwood bush down in

their plantations. "We keep it down with spray. If it gets big, it keeps the sunshine from the small trees."

Replanting is done every year. Up until this year, the small seedlings, six to eight inches high, were placed out in the spring. This year, a fall planting has worked out well.

There was a time when the Desrochers used to grow their own seedlings, which they'd transplant after about two years. But the birds found the tiny trees tasty, so now Albert buys seedlings from a nursery each year. All the pines are now cut for this year's market. "We cut them in the middle of October," says Desrochers, "and this bothers a lot of people but they don't realize that the colour is best then. When the weather gets cold, some of the trees start to turn yellow. A cut pine will last a long time when it's kept outdoors." Spruce can't be cut until the end of November.

The cut trees are baled

in the field and trucked to Desrochers' yard where they are picked up by dealers. They used to bring the big trucks right out to the field but now with baling, a load of trees is so heavy they can't get those big trucks into the bush!" Sometimes, as Albert

cuts a tree, he wonders where it will end up, with its coloured lights and tinsel. "Ours go down to Ohio, and some to Massachusetts." This year he sent four thousand to Windsor, and he reckons that many of them will wind up across the border in Detroit.

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## TOWNSHIP OF TINY PLANNING BOARD MEETING

The Ratepayers of the Township of Tiny are invited to attend a public meeting in the Committee Room of the Municipal Building at the Township of Tiny in Perkinsfield.

The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday the 1st day of December, 1976 at 8:00 p.m.

This public meeting is to present proposed Amendment No. 14 to the Official Plan for the Township of Tiny Planning Area. Amendment No. 14 is to add a new subsection to the Roads Policy entitled "Construction of Structures" and this subsection will alleviate difficulties for ratepayers to obtain building permits to add to existing non-complying uses

Roger E. Robitaille,  
SECRETARY-TREASURER,  
Township of Tiny,  
Planning Board.

## Midland Fall Fair gate receipts up

The Midland Fall Fair was the opening topic of discussion at a recent meeting of the Tiny Tay Agricultural Society.

Gate receipts were reported higher than last year however, many labour costs had increased. Secretary-treasurer Nancy Keefe said the good weather was probably responsible for the fine turnout. A larger crowd had been anticipated for Friday night to view the horse pulling contest. A fair number of people braved the rain on Friday night to see this event which was at the fair for its second year.

Following the financial review, Keefe read the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors.

Once again this year, the Tiny and Tay Agricultural Society will sponsor the North Central 4-H Calf Club at their annual banquet to be held Friday evening, November 26 at the Vasey United Church.

Some of the executive and Board members will be attending the 4-H evening to represent the Tiny and Tay Agricultural Society. A banquet and social evening for members and helpers of the fair board was one of the main topics for discussion. Due to a great number of other events coming up in the near future, a date was not established nor a location. However, a committee of four board members was organized to plan and make further arrangements.

The possibility of holding the banquet in Vasey United Church with the church women catering was mentioned but it was decided there might be problems due to renovations which are being made at the church. The planning com-

mittee has since decided not to hold a banquet this year because of the difficulties in finding a place to hold it.

Members made a few suggestions for future fall fairs and these included a car demolition, tractor pull and oxen pull.

Designs and a pattern for the prize list booklets were another concern for the future. This is to be further looked into by the executive.



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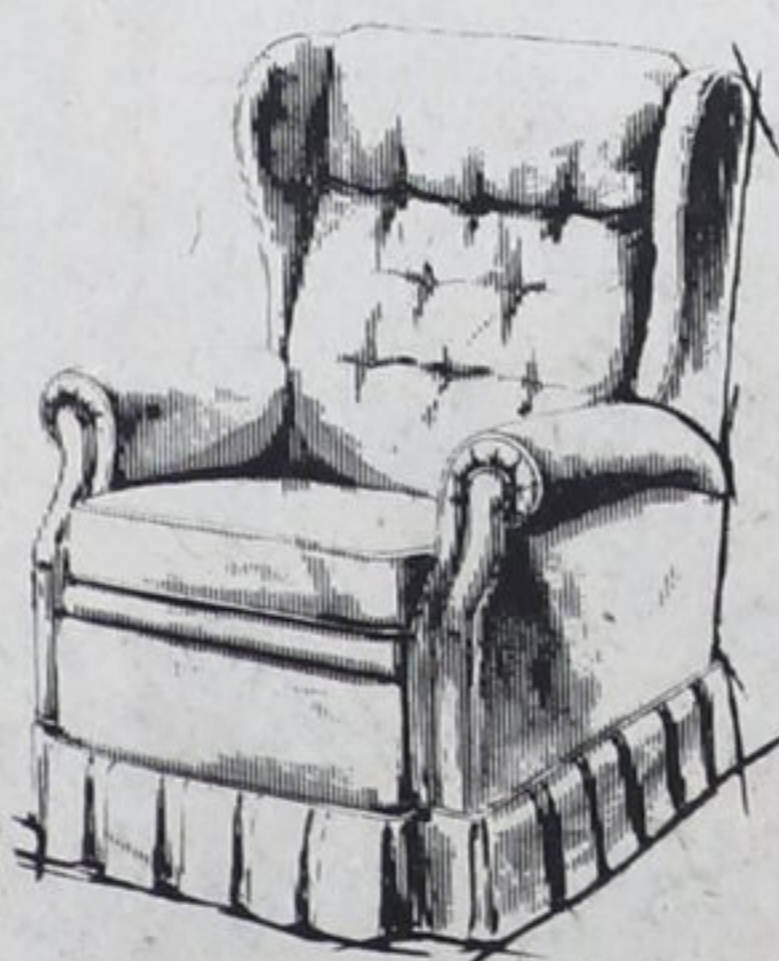
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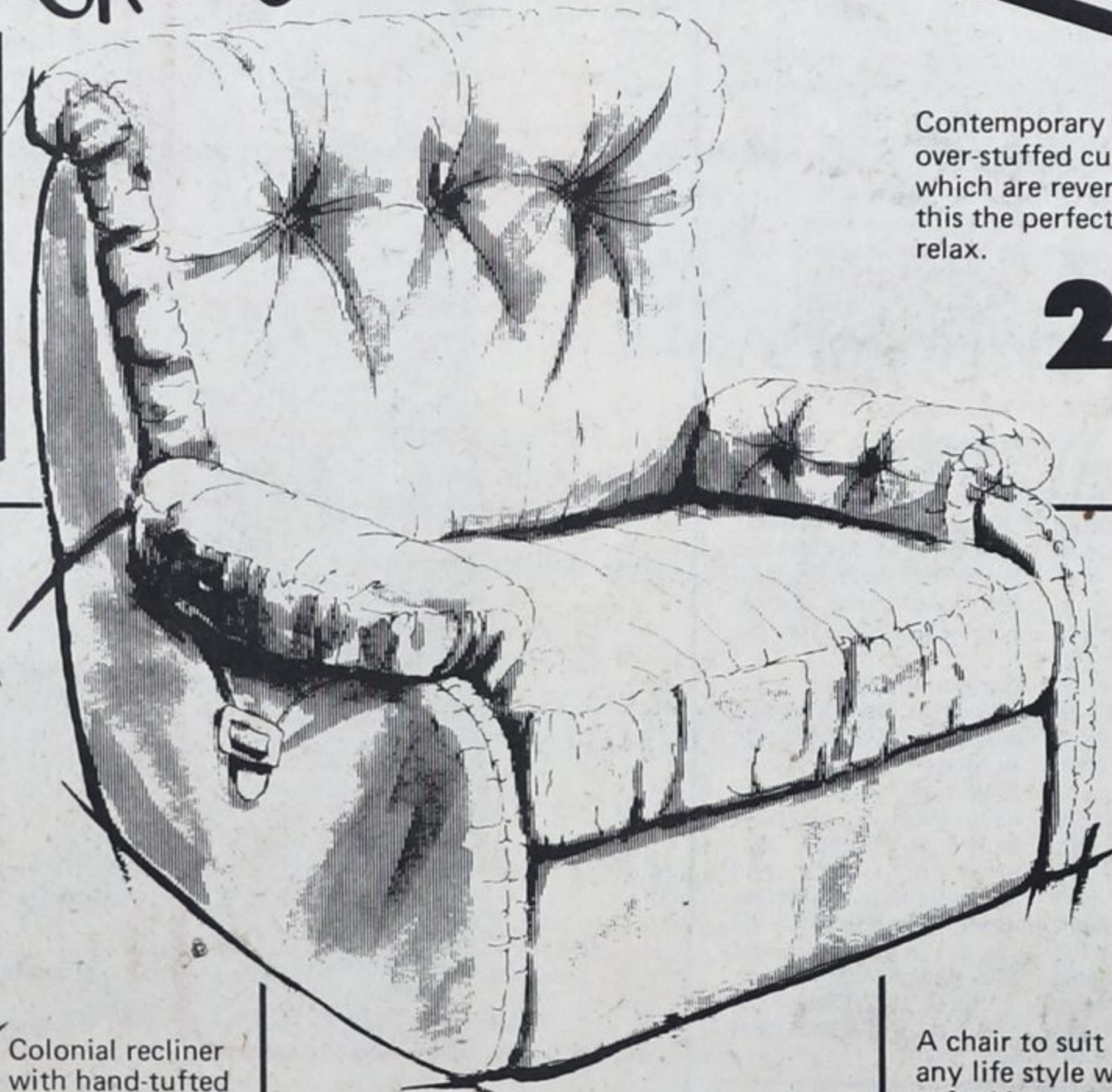
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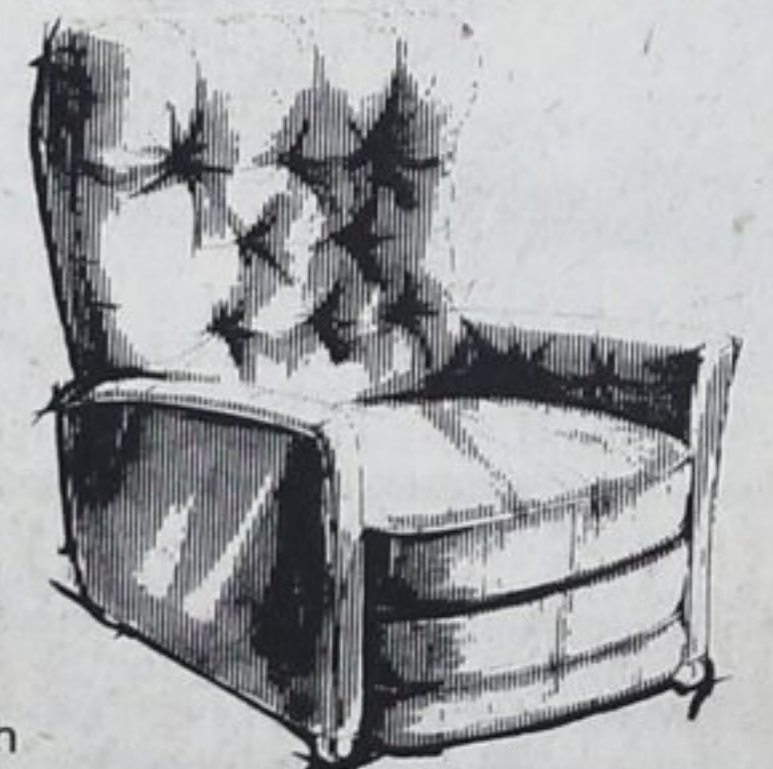


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