

Gardening a popular hobby

By NANCY HOSKIN
Spring has sprung and now is the time to begin thinking about your summer landscaping. With an early start and careful

preparation even an amateur gardener can create a breathtaking yard. We'll cover basic tips for planting flowers, vegetables, trees and for patching bare spots

in your yard which appear after the snow has gone.

An avid gardener has already tackled the job of planting seeds indoors which will then be transplanted when the soil is easy to tend, but it's not too late. Each packet of seeds, whether flowers or vegetables, have different germination times, so read the directions carefully.

Some seeds are started indoors, while others are put directly into the soil. Creating plants from seeds is an accomplishment and adds to the fun of this ever-popular hobby. Let's compare the cost savings involved when working with tomato seeds. The average pack of seeds at Sheridan Nursery, in Markham, costs 69 cents and you will reap about 30 plants from it, while a starter plant costs \$1.19, where four plants have been purchased.

There is a large selection of annuals; marigolds, zinnias, geraniums and impatiens, for example, that can be started indoors.

"A relatively new flower, the speckled geranium adds bright color to any garden. It is a light pink flower with dark pink specks. It was introduced two years ago by Thompson & Morgan and is our top seller," said Mr.

Baillie of Sheridan Nursery.

It's not too late to plant spring bulbs either. Flowers like dahlias, lilies, begonias and gladiolas can be planted in May, or as early as April, as soon as the soil can be worked, but be aware of possible late frost. Cover plants and delicate shrubbery with paper bags, plastic or sheeting.

Spring is the best season to plant all types of evergreens. These shrubs are best known for their instant color as they stay green all year. This is also prime time for tree planting. If planted in the fall, trees lie dormant.

Some of the faster growing trees, especially good for new homebuyers who want to fill their yards quickly, are the locust, ash, silver and morgan red maples.

Tree planting is easy, of course, depending upon the size of the particular tree. First, when the soil can be worked after it has thawed, dig two to three feet below ground, then transplant the tree making sure you don't disturb the root bulb, next fertilize, using a fertilizer with a high middle number meaning it has a high phosphorus content. Lastly, keep your new tree well watered.

This year vegetable seeds are selling at an all-time high, ex-

plained Mr. Baillie.

"People are getting into gardening for interest sake, it's now a popular hobby. Vegetables are easy to start with and people like the end result. There is some work in tending to the plants, but then you get to enjoy the fresh produce," said Mr. Baillie.

According to Mr. Baillie, a new seed that will be very popular for the Ontario market is the new sub-arctic tomato seed which withstands cooler temperatures, in cottage country, for example, where growing tomato plants is difficult because of the cool evening temperatures.

When grass begins to grow again many of us may notice bare spots in our yards. There are

many different grass seeds on the market, each type corresponds to different requirements. Were the bare spots caused by poor mineral content in the soil, are they in shady areas or were they previously caused by insects? There are as many different reasons as there are seeds to repair the damage.

Be careful with the quality of seed you purchase, even when tending a small area. Cheaper grass mixtures will not produce a first class lawn whether you are seeding an entire lawn or just a bare spot.

Gardening was a necessity years gone by, now it is fast becoming the most popular hobby in North America.

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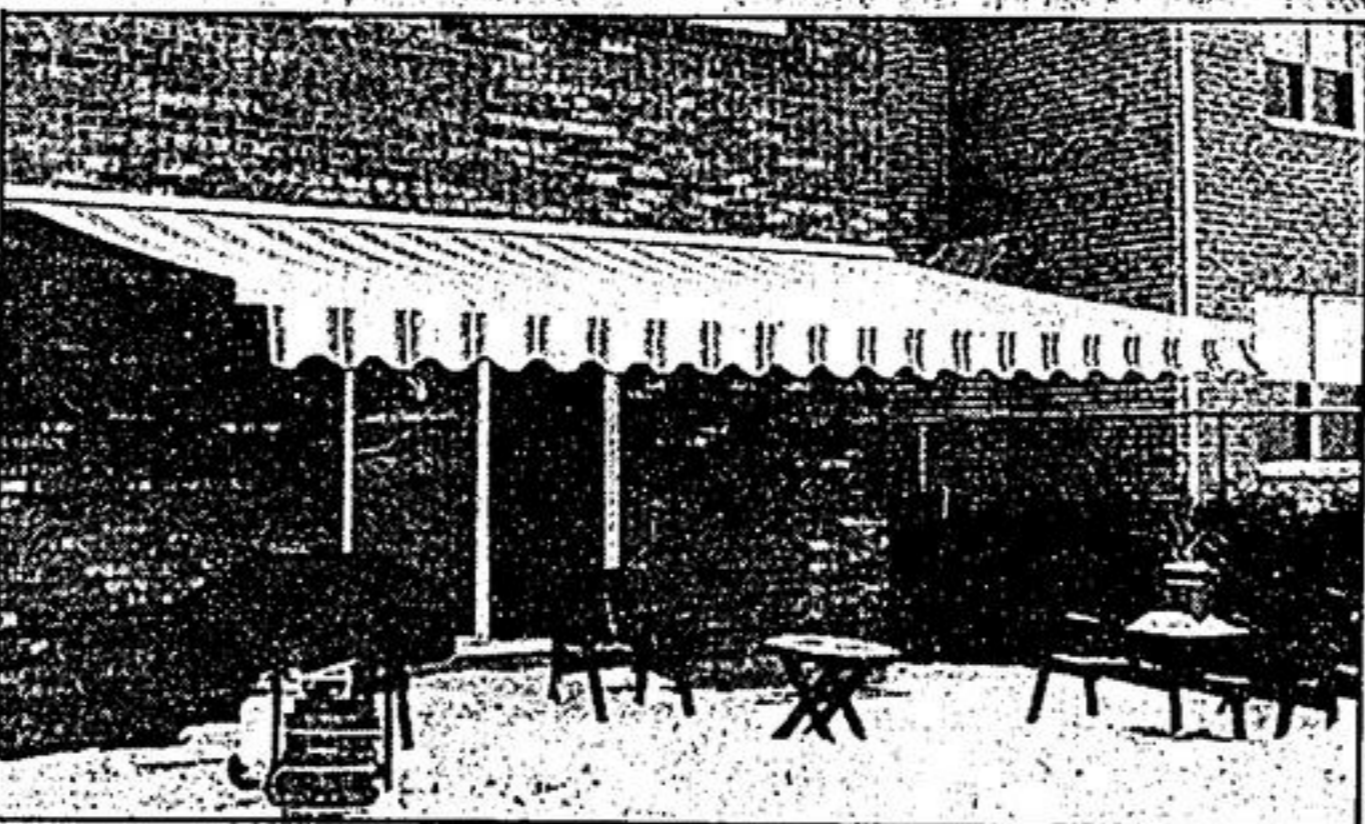
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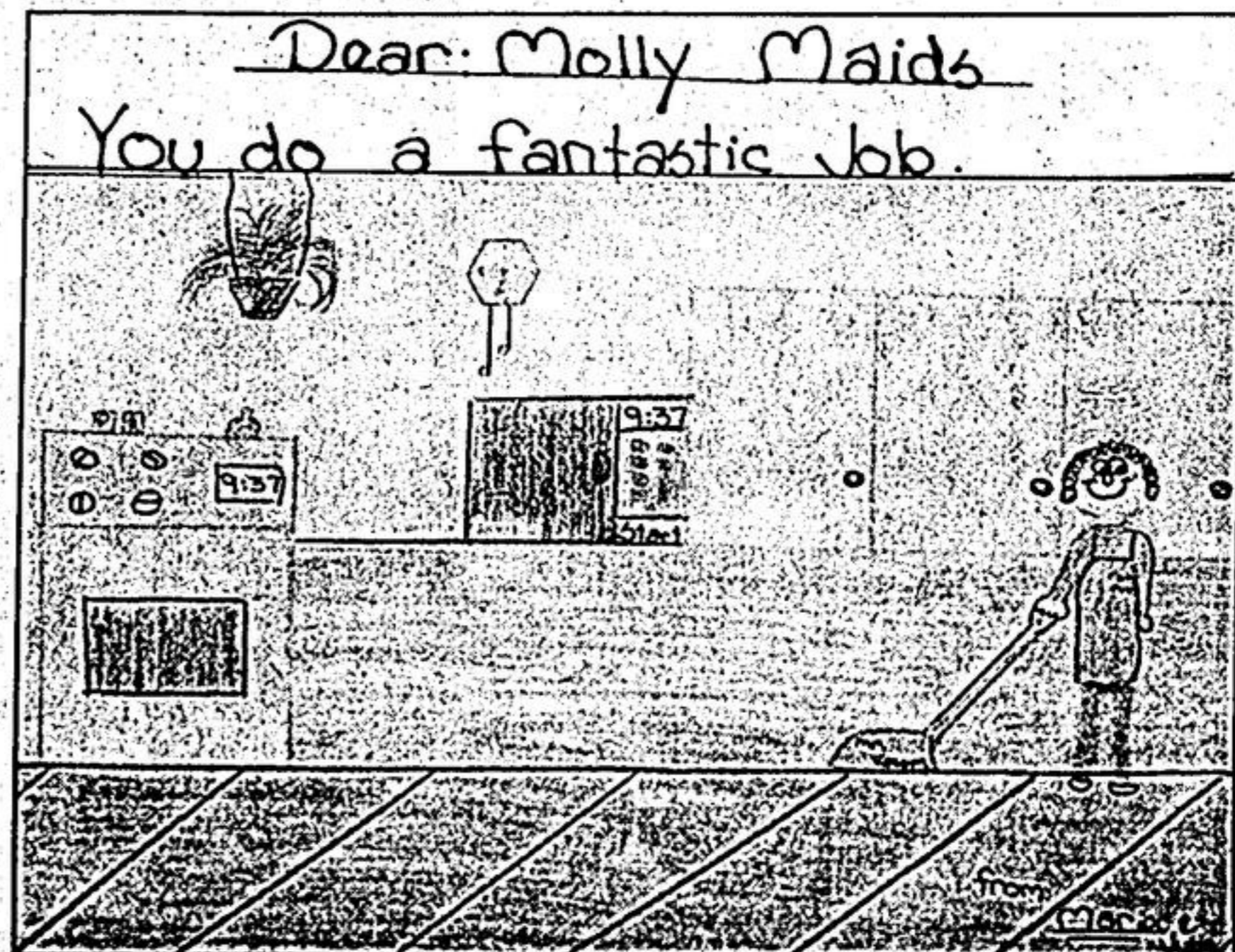


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