

Let's Get Growing

Preparing garden for winter makes for pleasant spring

By **MARJORIE MASON HOGUE**
Correspondent

I derive a sense of satisfaction from "putting the garden to bed" that is akin to "putting up preserves". In my mind's eye I am already enjoying how it will look next spring!

Muriel Hoover wrote to ask which plants need special treatment to survive winter and should the tops of perennials be cut back now or left until spring?

I am a firm believer in leaving the dead foliage to collect snow which is the best insulation for the garden. The only exception is diseased foliage - mildewed phlox, iris with bacterial leafspot etc... should be removed and put in the garbage not the compost.

Evergreens continue to transpire moisture from their

needles during the winter when their roots are unable to take water from the soil. Therefore, it is essential that they have several good waterings before freeze-up. Evergreens planted close to the house may not have benefited from the fall rains and may need special attention. Protect pyramidal evergreens from heavy snow or ice damage with plastic mesh or tie at intervals with green twine - there is no need to bundle them up like burlap mummies. Do construct a burlap wall around rhododendrons. The space between the plant and the burlap can be filled with leaves that you have raked from the lawn. All fruit trees including ornamental plum, cherry and crabapple should be protected from rodents with plastic or wire tree guards or a bitter tasting repellent that is

painted or sprayed onto the bark. Tender roses need special attention in November. Do not cut back any canes unless they are situated where they could cause bodily harm when whipped by winter winds. Remove and garbage any leaves which may harbor black spot or powdery mildew spores. Cover each plant to a depth of 12 inches with soil that has been brought for the purpose - not scraped from around the plants. A rose collar will reduce the amount of soil needed. The roses should be dug and buried in a trench about 24" deep.

If you have a garden pool, remove the submersible pump and store it in a frost-free place according to the manufacturer's instructions. Hardy waterlilies will survive in the pool if it is 24 inches deep or they may be

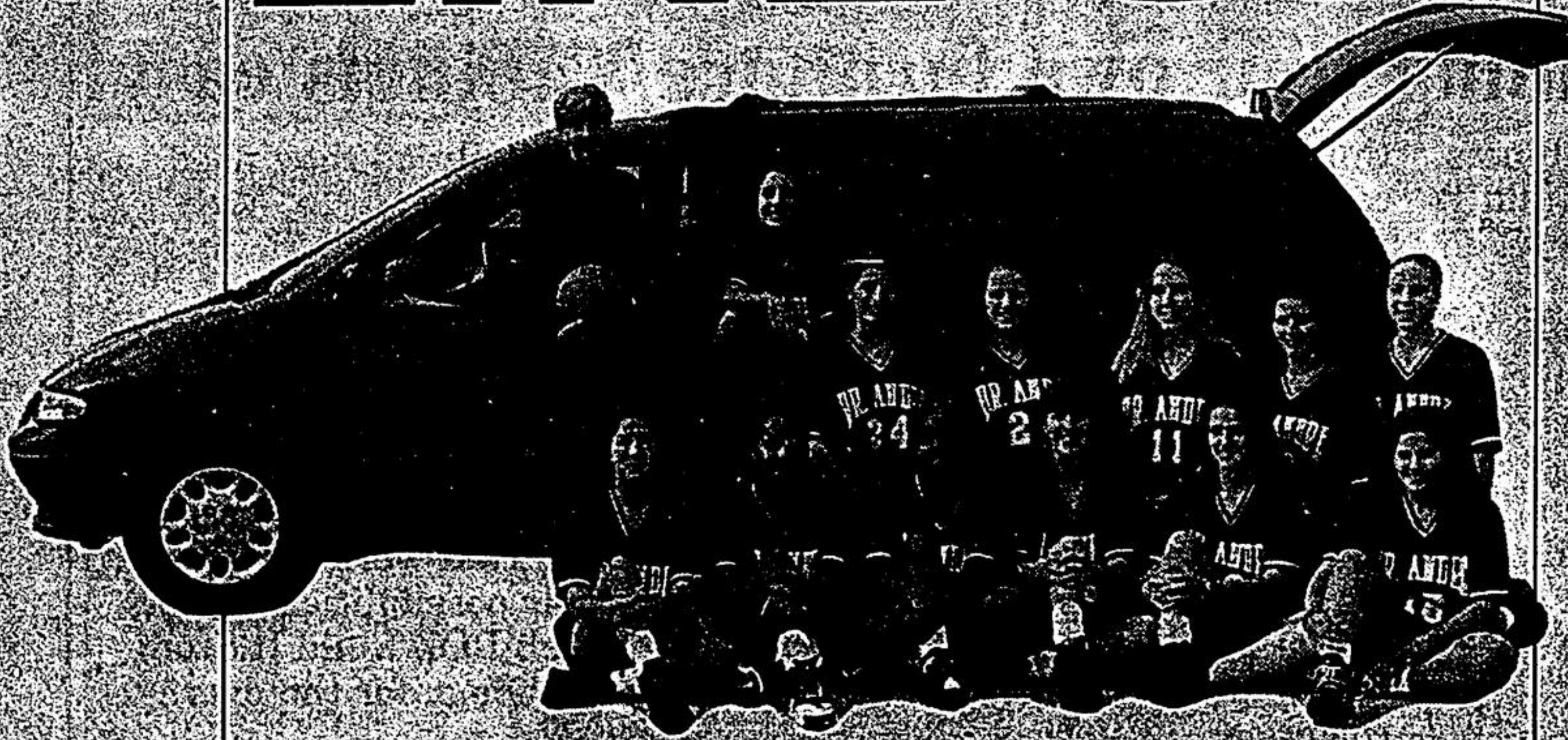
wrapped in damp burlap and wintered in a cold cellar.

Chop and compost annual flowers and vegetables. Turn over the soil in your vegetable garden to expose hibernating insects. Mulch fallen leaves with your lawnmower and spread them over your gardens. Top with compost that you have made or purchased. This combination mulch and fertilizer will keep the

ground from thawing during winter's mild spells and winter snow and rain will take nutrients into the soil. Finally, put up some birdfeeders where they can be observed from indoors.

Send questions or comments to: Let's Get Growing, c/o The Tribune, 88 Brock Street West, Uxbridge, ON L9P 1R4, attn: Marjorie Mason Hogue.

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