

Remember to plant a row of vegetables for the hungry

I learned a very important lesson this week - never again will I ever say that spring has arrived during the first week of April.

I hope that no one heeded my advice to begin removing winter mulches. This week's unwelcome cold snap has once again demonstrated the amazing toughness of early spring bulbs.

I was delighted to read in Wednesday's *Tribune* that Uxbridge Council, at the request of citizens led by publisher Patricia Pappas, has agreed to enter the Communities in Bloom program which is growing at an amazing rate across the country and around the world.

This competition between communities of the same size encourages beautification through planting and maintenance. It is very exciting to get caught up in the fervor of planting - just remember that the care of plants must be a commitment for the entire growing season.

As you are planning which beautiful flowers you will grow, don't neglect another need. If you have space to grow vegetables, plan to "Plant a Row for the Hungry." While all fresh fruit and vegetables are appreciated, those with longkeeping capabilities such as potatoes, carrots and cabbage are especially valuable. Through gardening pursuits, our communities can be both beautiful and caring.

Amy Hood, a longtime Stouffville gardener, submitted some questions which should be discussed before we start planting. She has been having recurring disease problems with both her bean and tomato crops. As you plan your vegetable garden this year, remember the principle of rotation - never plant the same crop in the same location two years in a row. Besides preventing the build up of specific diseases it assures that the gardener never becomes bored.

Amy saves her own tomato seeds and

produces beautiful plants which unfortunately succumb shortly after the first fruit ripens. There are two types of tomato varieties: determinate which produce heavily for four weeks and then are finished, or indeterminate which continue fruiting until frost. A good indeterminate variety is 'Better Boy'. A disease known as early blight or alternaria blight causes dark concentric ringed spots beginning on the lower leaves. This occurs when the plants are loaded with fruit during humid, warm weather. Pick off the first diseased leaves and spray the still green foliage with a sulphur based fungicide.

To prevent seed-borne diseases, soak your saved seed in a 10-per-cent bleach solution (1 part bleach and 9 parts water) for 10 minutes and rinse in clear water prior to planting.

After the first picking, Amy's bush beans become covered with a white mold. Warm, damp

weather encourages molds and mildews.

Avoid overhead watering and never pick beans when the leaves are damp as

you will spread disease spores. Consider spacing the plants further apart to provide better air circulation and choose a disease resistant variety.

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



Let's Get Growing

Marjorie Mason Hogue

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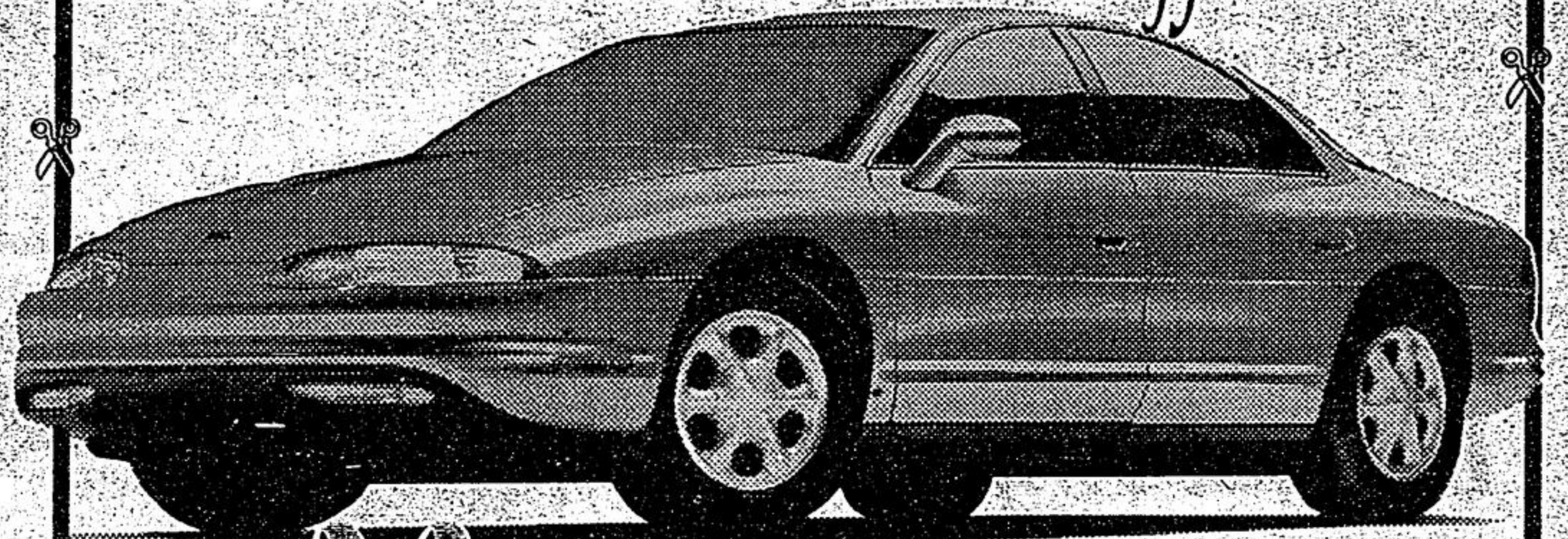
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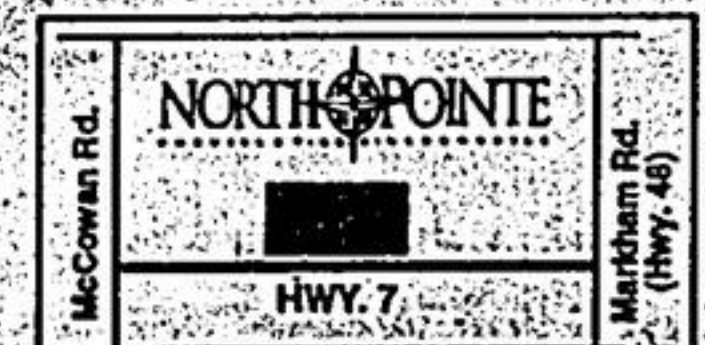
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