

TOTAL HOME

Advertising Feature of The Markham Economist & Sun/Stouffville Sun - Tribune

Over-wintering tips to gardeners

To prepare and plant your garden for fall and winter means more than raking dead leaves and generally tidying up the yard.

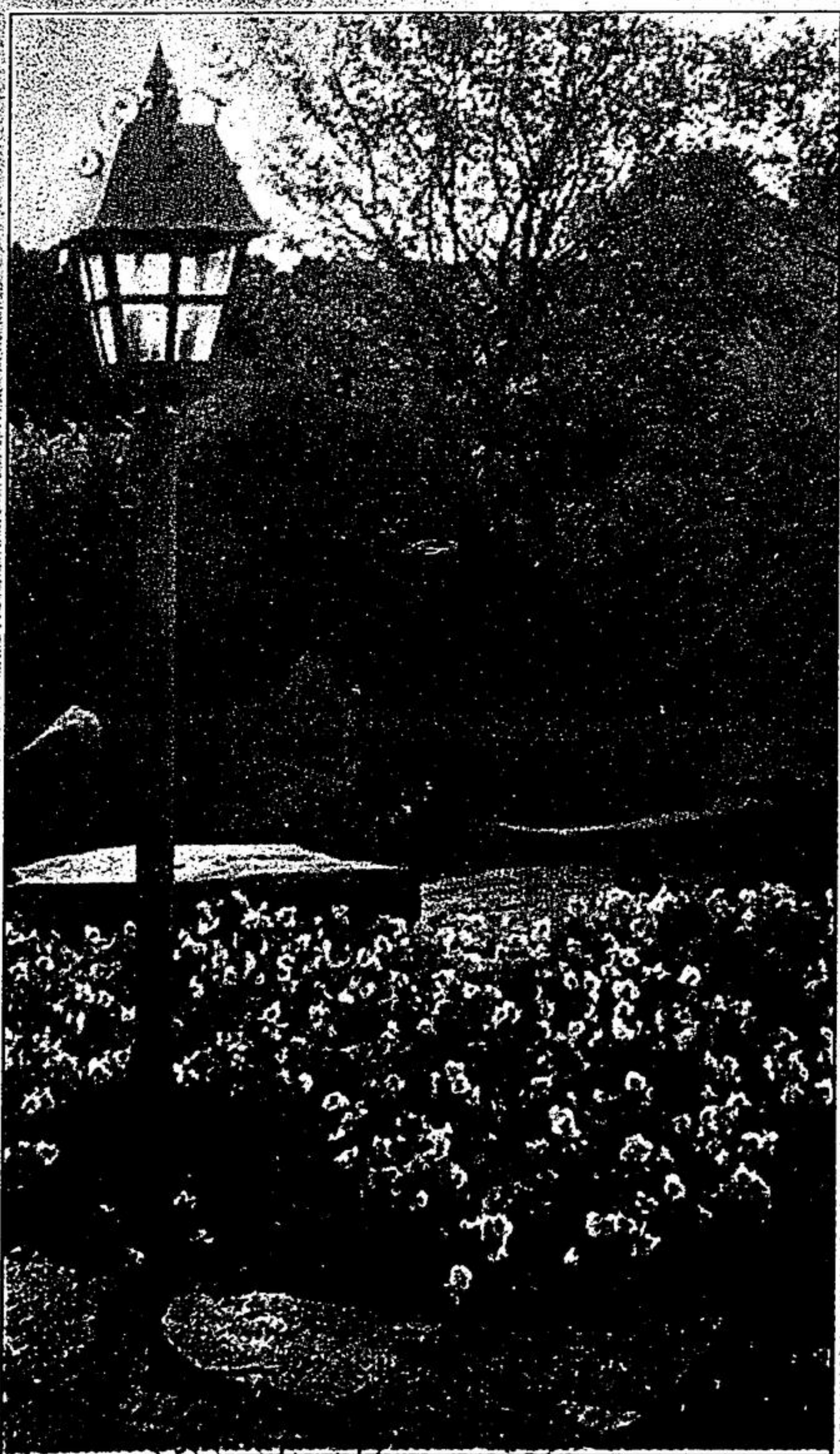
"A few extra steps now can make a big difference in your garden for next year," says Jeff Howe, president of Fernlea, the flower experts, and also the home of the famed Icicle Pansies. "For example, during the last weeks of summer while you're cleaning up spent flowers and vines, try to leave seed pods and dried blooms. Birds will thank you, and your garden will have an opportunity to re-seed itself. Plus, you will create some winter interest."

Look for any leaves or branches that are diseased or contain pests and ensure that they are not put into the compost bin to spread disease. Also, if you've removed any such problem with pruners, be careful to clean them with a household disinfectant before using on a healthy plant or bush.

"Once your garden is ready to plant this fall's Icicle Pansies, be sure to choose an area with lots of sun, and minimal wind exposure for the best results," Howe explained. "This type of pansy is hardy and guaranteed to bloom in fall and again in the spring, whether you're in a snow-belt or cool zone."

Pansies should be planted in moist soil, enriched with organic matter. Improve drainage by mounding up raised beds and adding mulch around the base of the plants. This will also insulate the roots. Avoiding road salt is critical to successful overwintering.

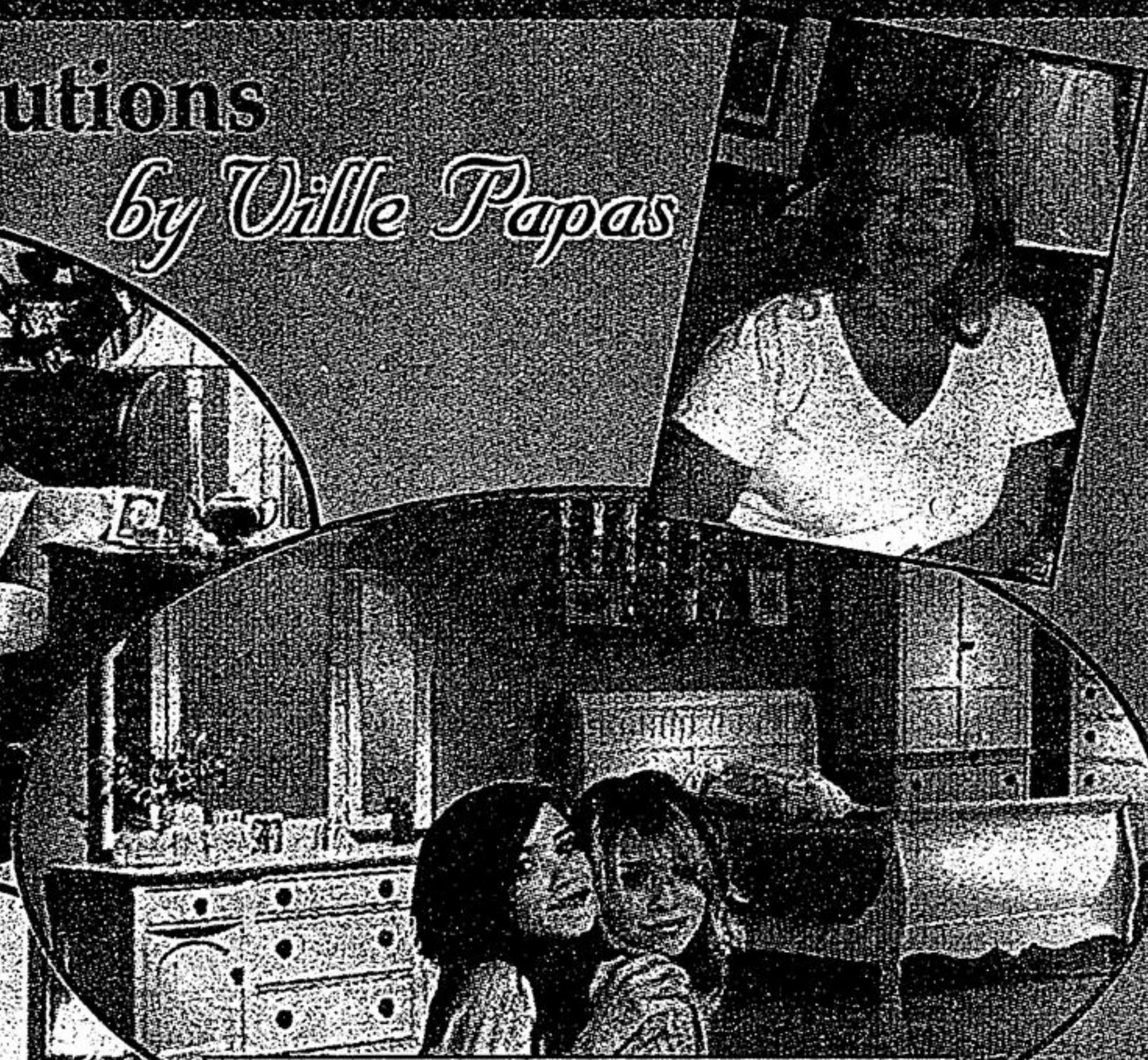
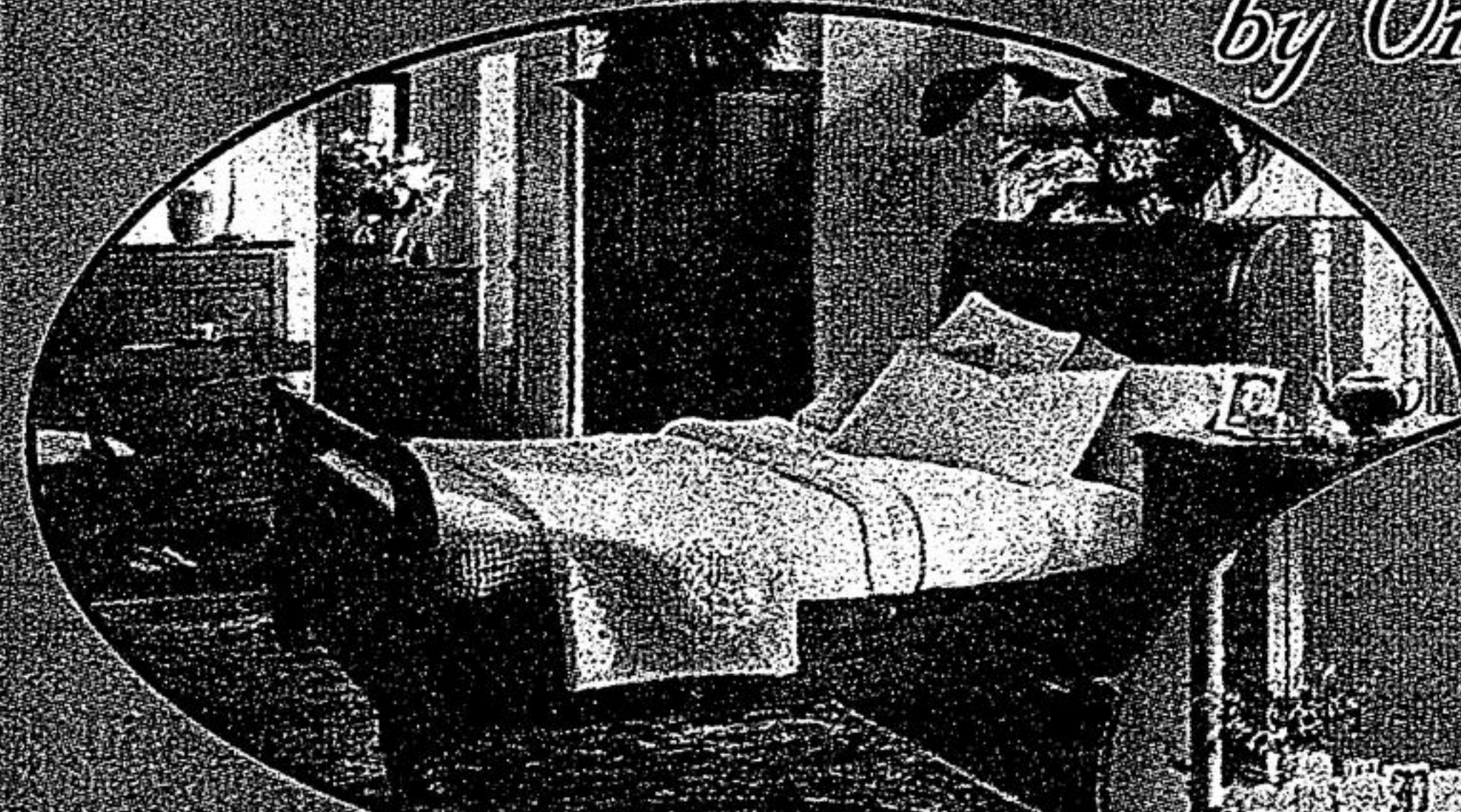
Check the website www.fernlea.com for plant hardiness zones, and also to assist you in choosing the right plants for your temperature zone. Fernlea has further suggestions and recipes for fall gardens and containers.



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