



**COOL COLLAR**

I think my "cool collar" may have saved me a heat stroke a time or two.

The collar is made of an old terry-cloth towel that will go around your neck easily. Fold up one-third of the towel length-wise and sew pockets vertically in the folded section, three to four inches apart. Stuff the pockets with ice cubes, fold the top third of the towel over the pockets and put it around your neck and shoulders. Fasten it with one safety pin in front. If the cubes melt before your hot garden or lawn work is finished, fill them up again.

(Hugh Sauer, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)

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Gardening Letters

Doug Green

The first thaw of the spring left us a little wetter and considerably in awe of the incredible amount of water that decided to run through our greenhouses. The drainage tiles were not yet thawed, so the water took the easiest route, right through the middle of the greenhouses. I have never seen so much water in the greenhouses before if we could have put it on top of the benches instead of underneath, we wouldn't have had to water for a week.

April is a good month for thawing out the garden but there is a lot that the average gardener can do now. As soon as the ground can be worked in the gardens, it's a good time to transplant fall blooming perennials or move that shrub that has been blocking the walkway. Lawns should receive a very thorough and brisk raking to remove dead leaves and winter debris. This raking is a good way to begin the spring season. The flower garden can be forked or roto tilled if this wasn't done in the fall, (it should have been you know). Visits to the local nurseries can start as soon as you can safely work the ground to obtain the shrubs, and other hardy plants that can be planted right away. Check with the nursery whether the plants you want to use have been wintered or are hardy enough to take frosts.

Every year I tell you about not rushing the season by trying to

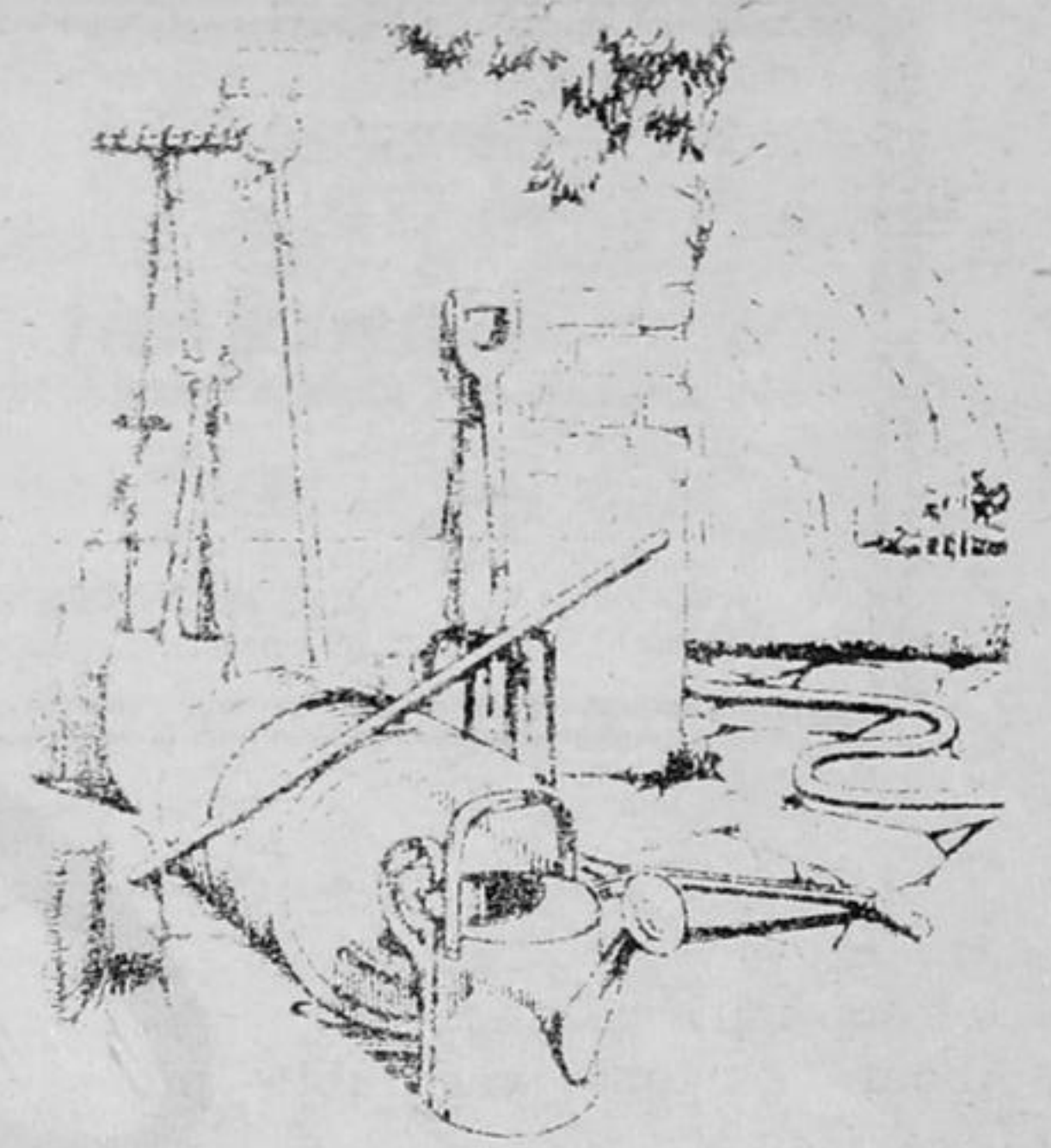
be the first one to plant the garden. Every year I mention that the average last frost is somewhere around the middle of May. Last year the last frost on the Oak Leaf Rd. was June 29. Every year I mention that plants that are put in the cold ground will usually only stall out and will be overtaken by those plants which are planted in properly warmed soil. **NOT THIS YEAR!** This year, I will not advise you on these matters but will instead remain silent regarding the dangers of planting seedlings out too early.

Those of you who have fruit trees may be well advised to start treating the fruit in an organic manner instead of constant spraying. The following is a brief outline of a treatment programme which will reduce your pest problem considerably. Growing fruit on a home scale and eating your own fresh fruit without sprays is a rewarding experience and you can accept some pest damage while the commercial growers find it difficult to do so. The first step this spring is to thoroughly rake all the leaves up around the base of the tree. This should have been done last fall to prevent the wintering over of the scab bacteria but doing it this spring will be better than not doing it at all. Burn these leaves. Second step: before the leaf buds break, spray a dormant oil spray. Use 250 ml of oil, a mineral oil or non-detergent motor oil will do nicely, mixed in a gallon of water and with several tablespoons of liquid dishwashing soap added. Mix this concoction thoroughly and keep it agitated while you spray. The night temperature should not be freezing when you apply it. Last months column detailed this data. A useful thing to do is to apply tanglefoot paste to the trunk of the tree. This paste prevents crawling critters from going up the tree. The most useful thing to do however is to apply tanglefoot to a red ball (an old Christmas tree ornament?) and hang it in the tree. Insects think this red ball is an apple and they will come to it to lay eggs, to eat etc. The tanglefoot traps them and they are removed from creating problems for the real fruit. A red ball can really get coated with insects quickly this way during


the summer so you may have to be prepared to clean it and rehang it. Keep the grass cut around the base of the tree or better yet, use a weed fabric and mulch around the base of the tree.

As an aside, I used the tanglefoot last year to coat my young Chestnut trees and prevent the cats from sharpening their claws on the tender bark. Worked really well.

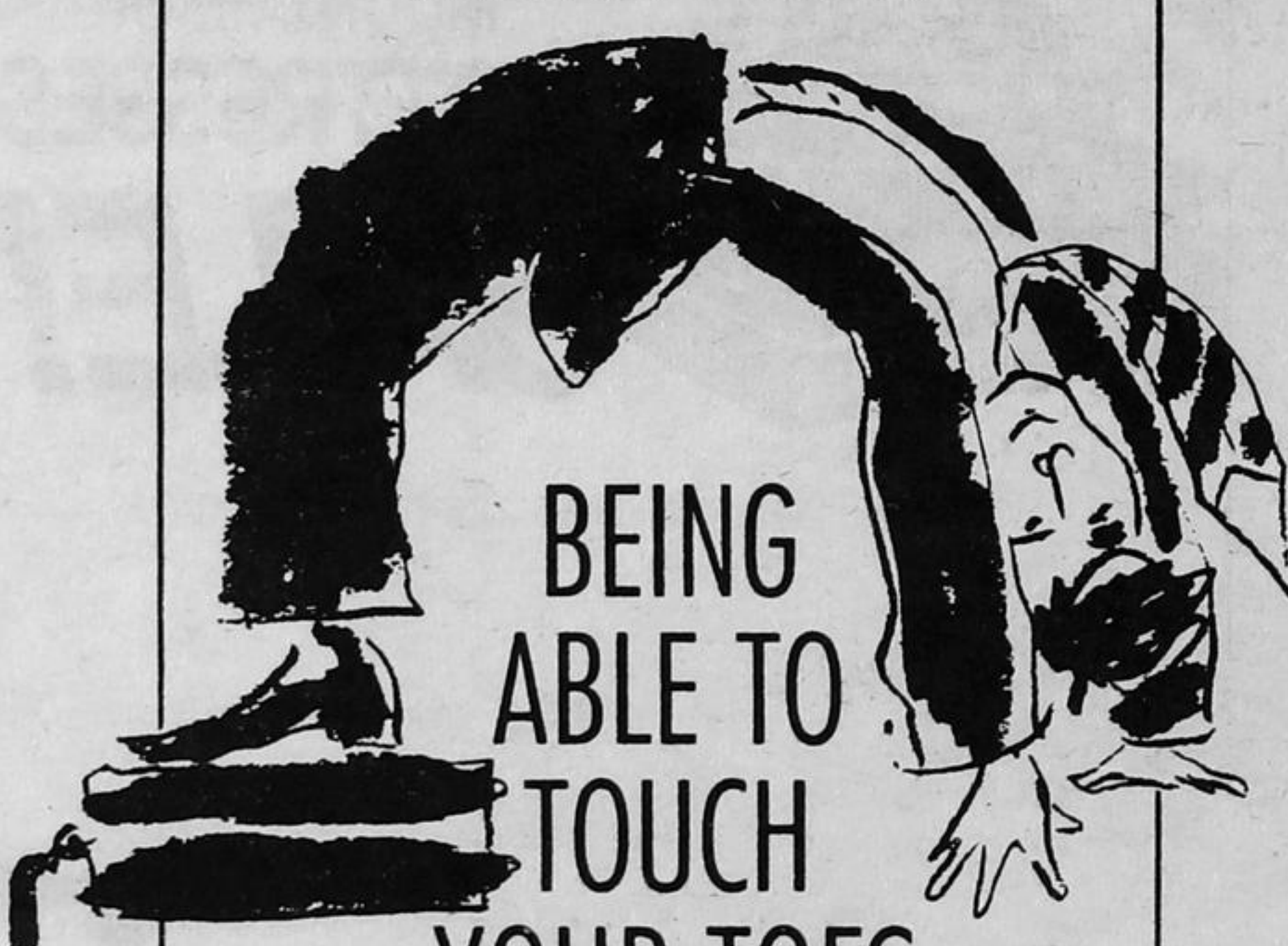
As you read this, spring will have arrived and with it another gardening year. Lets have a good one.



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