



Make Your House A Home

Home Improvement - Lawn & Garden

Today's savvy gardeners don't just gripe about their soil, they do something about it

Experienced gardeners have learned that flowers, shrubs and trees have a number of things in common with people. How they fare in their later years, for example, depends in no small measure on the environment they grow up in.

Of course, genetics plays a part, too. That's why, when buying live plants, it's wise to take the time to select those specimens which appear to be the most vigorous and healthy. Everything else being equal, those are the ones that have the best chance of developing into the kind of plantings that will make you proud.

Once the plants are selected, however, it's the environ-

ment they are planted in and the care they get which will determine how well they will do in the long run. Most gardeners realize the importance of periodic waterings and regular feedings throughout the growing season, so they take care of those basics. That's good. But to protect your investment and get your new plants to perform to their maximum, one must go beyond that.

What is often overlooked is the soil that the plants are growing in. It's easy to dig a hole, place the plant in the hole and return the same soil to cover the roots. It with very little effort, that same

Amending the soil produces several benefits. By improving the porosity of the soil, more water

and fertilizers find their way into the root zone and are retained there for use by the plant. There is also less run-off. At the same time, more oxygen becomes available to the plant roots, which themselves are encouraged to spread out and develop into a sturdy underground network to take in vital nutrients and moisture to their maximum, one must go beyond that.

There are two easy ways to upgrade the soil with a variety of soil conditioners. One is to

spread the materials over the planting bed and till them into the soil. Another is to mix the conditioners with the existing soil that is taken from the planting holes before replacing it around the plant roots.

Both methods are satisfactory and can turn almost any soil into a planting area in which your flowers, trees and shrubs will thrive.

A variety of soil conditioners can be used. If you prefer to mix your own materials, you may select from a number of products, such as manure, organic humus, peat moss and the like.

Turf voted best playing surface by athletes and homeowners

The votes are in. What kind of playing surface do athletes prefer? According to a 1994 NFL Players Association (NFLPA) league-wide player survey, 85 percent of the 965 players who responded preferred play on natural grass, 7 percent preferred artificial turf and 8 percent had no preference. Other survey results showed that 93 percent of the players believe that artificial turf is more likely than grass to contribute to injury.

"In this survey, we have heard from the true experts on playing surfaces—the players," said Gene Upshaw, NFLPA executive director.

From the gridiron to our own backyards, homeowners also see the safety benefits of a properly maintained lawn and landscape. According to a 1994 Gallup survey sponsored by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA), 45 percent of Americans recognize that grass provides a safe, high-quality play area for children.

The top five benefits of a well-maintained lawn and landscape listed by Gallup are:

- It beautifies the neighborhood.
- It provides a place of beauty and relaxation for the family, employees or visitors.

- It reflects positively on its owner.

- It increases real estate value.

- It provides a comfortable place to entertain, work or visit.

"Lawns are a positive investment in our well-being and bottom line," said Ann E. McClure, CAE, executive vice president of PLCAA. "They're also beneficial to the environment."

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's publication *Healthy Lawn, Healthy Environment*, "Healthy grass provides a feeding ground for birds, who find it a rich source of insects, worms and other food. Thick grass prevents soil erosion, filters contaminants from rainwater and absorbs many types of airborne pollutants, like dust and soot. Grass is also highly efficient at converting carbon dioxide to oxygen, a process that helps clean the air."

For more information on the environmental benefits of a healthy lawn, PLCAA recommends the brochure *Healthy Turf, Healthy Earth*. For your free copy, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to PLCAA, attn.: Healthy Turf, 1000 Johnson Ferry Road, NE, Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068.

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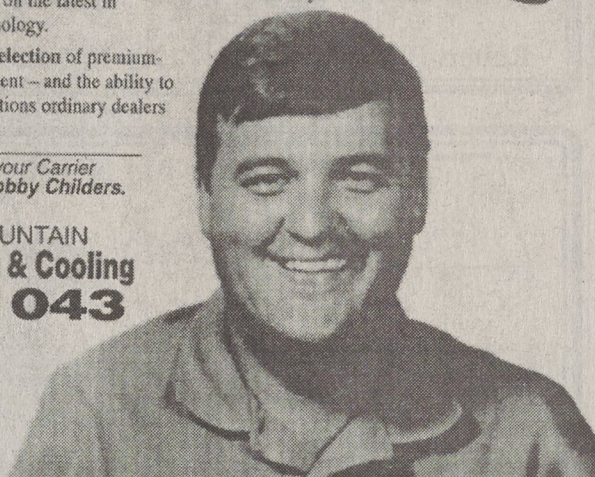
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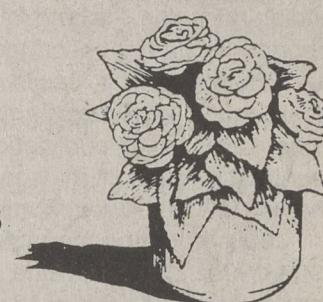


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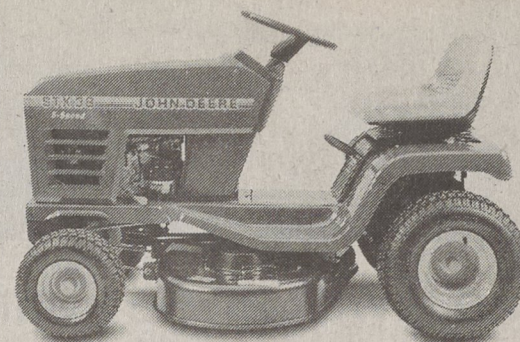
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FLEAS

From Page 2
irritating skin, fleas can also cause tapeworm infestations, behavioral changes and, in young or very old animals, anemia.

But you can battle flea attacks if you take the proper steps. Outside the house, apply a proven product such as SEVIN® brand carbaryl insecticide to shrubs, woody areas, around entranceways and to areas where your pet sleeps or rests. Inside your home, wash your pet's blankets and other bedding material in hot, soapy water. Be sure to vacuum your carpets and upholstered furniture regularly, paying special attention to crevices and corners near baseboards where fleas love to hide. Immediately dispose of the vacuum bag so that it will not become a breeding ground for fleas in your closet.

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