garden and patio

Fences should conform with home style, lifestyle

There are as many types of fences and gates as there are houses. The fence should be built to conform to the style of the house as well as the lifestyle of the people living there.

A chain link fence would probably be most practical to keep small children or pets from wandering, while a family with a swimming pool or a patio with a barbeque might prefer a privacy fence. Any fence should be sturdy enough to fulfil its functional as well as decorative value.

Assuming you have decided on a chain link fence in either vinyl covered or galvanized material, here is how you would install it yourself.

To make sure you get all material required, draw a detailed diagram of property to be fenced. Indicate all post and gate locations. Posts should be spaced not more than ten feet apart. A corner or end post is required whenever a change of direction is made in the fence or a change of elevation in the top rail.

Set corner, gate and end posts in cement. End posts should be set out of the ground 1½ inches higher than the height of the fence fabric used. (See diagram). Drive or set line posts in cement at a height of 1½ inches lower than height of fence. The spacing of the line posts should not exceed ten feet. Height of posts can easily be lined up with a cord.

To set posts use a mixture of one part cement, two parts sand and three parts gravel, or Ready Mix. Allow to harden for at least 24 hours. Slope the cement so that water drains away from posts.

Install line post caps, top rail and rail end assemblies. The framework of the fence is now finished.

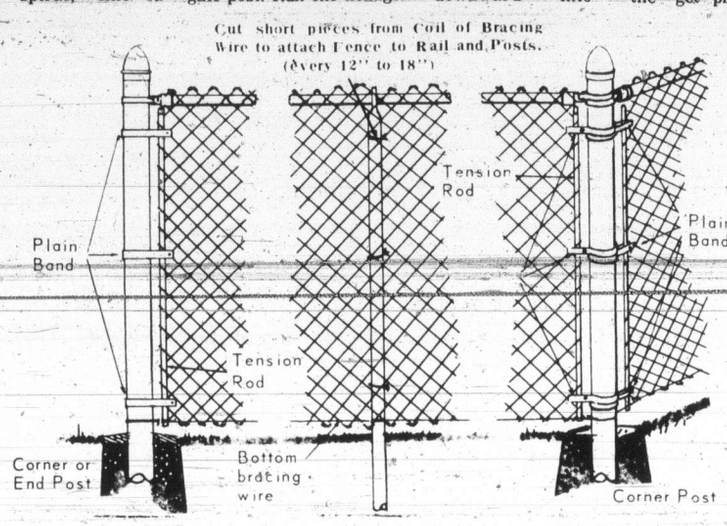
Attach fence fabric to posts, using plain bands and tension rods. (All these materials are supplied when you buy your fencing.) Fasten fence fabric to top rail and line posts with bracing wire. Also run bracing wire through bottom of fence.

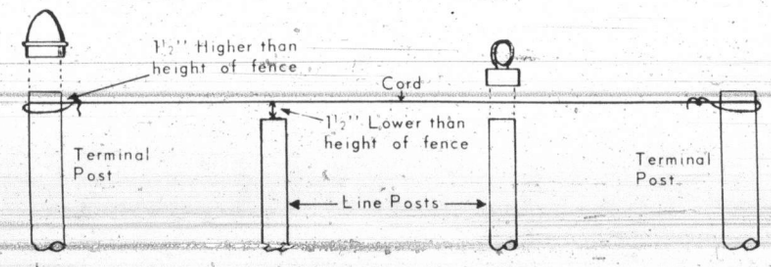
To cut fence, simply take out a spiral, like a corkscrew. To join, reverse procedure.

GATES

Gates can be hung right or left-handed. Hook two hinge band halves together around gate post. Run one hexagon nut to end of hinge bolt thread, put hinge bolt through holes of hinge bolt halves and apply second nut. Attach loosely. Attach second ban in the same manner. Point top hinge bolt downward into the corresponding hinge tube on gate. Point bottom hinge upward into tube, to prevent gate from being lifted out. Position gate properly, tighten nuts on hinge bolt. Move nuts back and forth to get proper clearance between gate post and gate. Drill ¼ inch hole in opposite gate post for latch catch bracket.

(This information is courtesy of Hutt Fence Ltd., Streetsville.)





Food basket up 1.5 per cent

The cost of the Ontario Food Council market basket in early June 1974 was $83.39, a $1.26 or 1.5 per cent increase from last month. The cost of the May basket was $82.13.

Price increases for fruits and vegetables such as potatoes, grapefruit and lettuce were responsible for approximately half of the total increase. Prices for beef, pork and poultry in total showed very little change from May.

Price increases for cake mixes and breakfast cereals accounted for approximately 20 per cent of the total increase. The cost of the basket in June 1973 was $70.90, placing the June 1974 cost at 17.6 per cent above last year.

The market basket is comprised of 147 food items which are typical of consumer purchasing patterns over a period of time.

Cut grass often but not too short

Too many people fail to realize that grass is a living plant. When they cut it, they take off "too much". The result is they destroy the leaf blade and can expose roots, particularly in summer, to the full strength of the sun.

The gardener who wants a good-looking lawn is involved in regular cutting of grass — never taking off too much at any one time. Obviously the regularity of cut depends on weather and soil conditions but the general principle of cutting grass every four or five days can make a major contribution to lawn care.

In this latter situation, with regularity of cut, the cuttings are short and can be left on the lawn to be assimilated as natural nutriment.

But associated with this technique is the type of mower used in this process. A heavy mower, whether it has a grass catcher or not, can create a situation of "compacting" the soil and compressing cuttings, creating a solid mat. Over a period of time this can restrict growth and result in bare patches.

Where no grass collection is undertaken, the range of hover mowers now available on the market have abvious advantages. By floating on a cushion of air over the grass, they also create an air flow which swirls cuttings under the hood covering to create a fine mulch which is then dissipated over the lawn area.

The fine mulch of grass cuttings is a form of natural "own blood" nutriment to the growing plant in contrast to the use of foreign stimulants.

At the same time, using grass cuttings as natural fertilizer brings time-saving advantages with no grass collection and the emptying of grass boxes. This activity can, in some circumstances, occupy as much as one-third of normal grass cutting operations. Invariably, a grass catcher becomes full when the mower is at the furthermost point from the compost heap.

The primary use of grass cuttings as own fertilizer for a lawn obviously limits additions to a compost heap. But there are, no doubt, few gardeners who have a shortage of compost potential in the average garden. In fact, the reverse is often the case.

While the hover mower technique of grass-cutting has obvious advantages in avoiding dangers of compaction, it also has many other attractive features.

For a start, the machine can be moved forwards; sideways; backwards. It is so easy to use that mowing every four or five days, as recommended, becomes a simple routine rather than a burdensome chore.

It can cope with grass cutting jobs which other machines cannot tackle as well. It can be used on slopes and banks; over level paving stones; right up to and over the edge of a lawn. It can also cut grass in either dry or wet conditions. Because it has no wheels there is never any problem of leaving wheel-marks on a soggy lawn, and it can be used immediately after watering the lawn — thus avoiding the "dust-storm" conditions common when mowing during dry spells.

Returning to general lawn care techniques, the use of a heavy mower, especially when fitted with a grass catcher which gets heavier as it is filled and thus puts even more weight over the cutting area, can cause compaction of soil and the growing plant. The most expensive grass-cutting machines, those used for example on golf club greens, are fitted for grass collection but these expensive items of equipment are normally beyond the budget of the average gardener. They are specially designed to take any increase of weight away from the cutting blades. In contrast, a hover mower eliminates this weight and pressure aspect but without care and regular cutting can still create a mat, or "thatch."

Raking several times a year and at least one spell of proper spiking of the lawn area for aeration, are sound basic principles to apply to avoid thatching.

Little has so far been written about the problems of "compaction" or "thatching" but greater interest is being shown by gardening specialists and in overall analysis there is general agreement the "thatching" is the lesser of the two evils and can be more easily overcome with less effort on the part of the individual gardener. With "compaction", prevention is far easier than cure.

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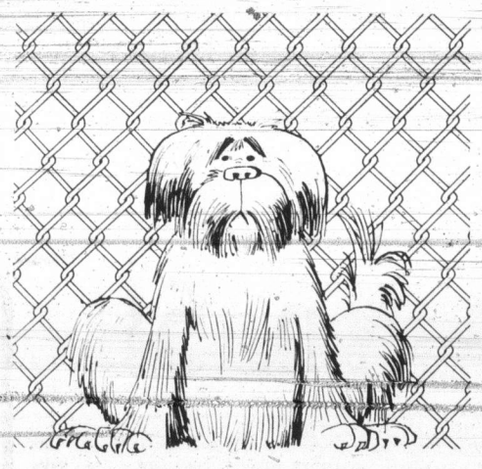

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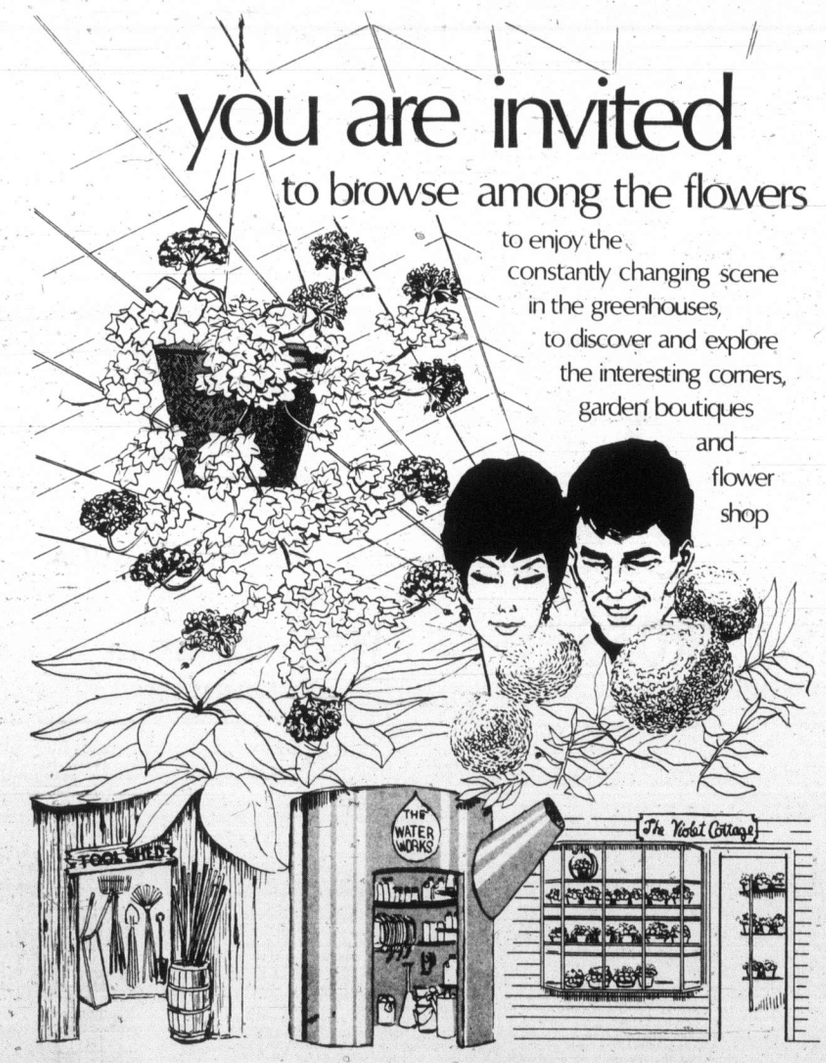

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