

outdoor H ME guide

Memorial Day: See
what's planned near you

PAGE 42

Grilling: 4 tips for
tasty backyard BBQ

PAGE 18

Low-maintenance
lawn alternatives

PAGE 28

OUTDOOR HOME GUIDE » STORY INDEX

Spring maintenance checklist for homeowners **PAGE 4**

Interesting facts about Memorial Day **PAGE 6**

Take your Memorial Day burgers up a notch **PAGE 7**

4 ways to prepare your home for bug season **PAGE 8**

5 tips to get your garage organized — and keep it that way **PAGE 10**

Launch your boat into a new season **PAGE 12**

Practice fireworks safety this summer **PAGE 14**

3 techniques to keep mosquitoes out of your backyard oasis **PAGE 16**

4 tips for backyard barbecue success **PAGE 18**

How and why to build a raised garden bed this season **PAGE 20**

Get your patio ready for summer living **PAGE 22**

Summer safety tips for your pet **PAGE 23**

How to respond to pesticide poisoning **PAGE 24**

Lawn watering and fertilizing techniques **PAGE 26**

Low-maintenance lawn alternatives **PAGE 28**

Swimming pool landscaping ideas **PAGE 30**

Exterior lighting can add ambiance to a property **PAGE 32**

Safety first when power washing your home this spring **PAGE 34**

How to add shade to a deck or patio **PAGE 36**

How to master grilling a thick cut of meat **PAGE 38**

Spruce Up for Spring: Fresh ideas for home upgrades **PAGE 40**

Rediscovering America: A quiz for Memorial Day **PAGE 41**

Memorial Day: See what's planned locally this year **PAGE 42**

Are you growing the right type of grass? **PAGE 44**

Tips for a safer, more enjoyable summer at the pool **PAGE 46**



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HOME MAINTENANCE

Spring maintenance checklist for homeowners

As the weather warms, there are a few maintenance tasks every homeowner should consider completing. Use this checklist as your guide:

Outdoor Upkeep

- Wash window exteriors for a better view.

- Clean gutters and downspouts to ensure proper water flow. Neglecting this task for too long can cause rot, mold and damage to your foundation.

- Get your patio or deck in tip-top shape for outdoor living. Sweep and hose it down. Remove patio fur-

nishings from storage. Wipe down surfaces and vacuum cushions (or launder them if they're machine washable).

- Inspect lawn equipment and tools for needed maintenance, repair and fuel refills.

- Mow the lawn. Trim the edges.

- After the next rainfall, inspect your yard for standing water, which can damage your home and invite mosquitoes. Consider hiring a landscaper to level out an uneven lawn.

HVAC Maintenance

- Change HVAC filters

at least once each season (ideally monthly). Dirty filters make equipment work harder and cause more wear and tear on equipment. They also increase your energy bill and lessen indoor air quality.

- According to Energy Star, 20-30% of the air that

moves through the duct system of a typical home is lost due to leaks, holes and poorly connected ducts. Consider professional duct sealing for improved energy efficiency and lower bills.

- Check to see whether your furnaces and air conditioners bear the ENERGY



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Inspect lawn equipment and tools for needed maintenance, repair and fuel refills.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

A little seasonal maintenance can go a long way to a safer, more beautiful and more eco-friendly home.

STAR logo. If not, consider a new unit. A properly-sized and installed ENERGY STAR air conditioner uses up to 20% less electricity than older models, and doing so may make you eligible for a Federal Tax Credit.

- Have a technician give your home's cooling system a pre-season tune-up so that everything is running efficiently by the time warmer weather arrives. You know the "personality" of your

heating or cooling unit best, so be prepared to provide the technician with important information. No fact is insignificant, as it may help them diagnose and fix a problem.

- Be sure that all HVACR installation and maintenance is performed only by a qualified professional. Read company reviews and ask the contractor if they have technicians certified by North American Technician Ex-

cellence (NATE). NATE-certified technicians have demonstrated knowledge of today's increasingly sophisticated heating and cooling systems. To find a NATE-certified technician in your area, visit Nate.org.

Safety

- Carbon monoxide, often referred to as the "silent killer," is odorless, colorless and tasteless. Protect your family by chang-

ing the batteries on your carbon monoxide detectors and ensuring you have a detector on each level of your home. When changing a furnace filter, make sure the new filter is correctly positioned and the access panel is securely fastened. Have your home's furnace inspected and serviced annually by a NATE-certified technician.

- Likewise, test all the smoke alarms in your home and replace

batteries as needed. The National Fire Protection Association recommends smoke alarms on every level of the home, including every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area.

A little seasonal maintenance can go a long way to a safer, more beautiful and more eco-friendly home.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

MEMORIAL DAY

Interesting facts about Memorial Day

Each year on the last Monday of May, Americans celebrate Memorial Day. Memorial Day is a federal holiday that honors and mourns American military personnel who died while performing their duties in service to the United States Armed Forces.

Memorial Day has a rich history and one that's worth revisiting as the nation prepares to honor the sacrifices made by its military personnel over the centuries.

- Freed slaves played a role in the establishment of Memorial Day. The American Civil War is the deadliest military conflict in American history, as the Union and the Confederacy each suffered more than 800,000 casualties by the time the war ended in 1865. According to History.com, as the war drew to a close, hundreds of Union soldiers who were being held as prisoners of war died and were buried in a mass grave in a Confederate prison camp in South Carolina. After the Confederate surrender, more than 1,000 now-freed slaves honored those recently deceased Union soldiers during a ceremony in which they sang hymns and distributed flowers. The ceremony was dedicated to the fallen soldiers and served as a precursor to what is now celebrated as Memorial Day.

- Confederate soldiers were honored, too. Confederate losses during the Civil War outnumbered Union losses, and those losses were not forgotten by southerners who survived the war. History.com notes that, in 1866, the Georgia-based Ladies Memorial Association, one of many similar organizations to arise in the aftermath of the war, pushed for a day to honor fallen Confederate soldiers. In fact, these efforts are believed to have influenced General John A. Logan. In 1868, General Logan, a Civil War veteran who was then serving as commander-in-chief of a group of Union veterans, ordered the



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Memorial Day has a rich history that highlights the importance of honoring the men and women who have given their lives while in service of the United States military.

decoration of Union graves with flowers on May 30. The day would ultimately be known as "Memorial Day."

- It took a long time for Memorial Day to become a federal holiday. Despite tracing its origins to the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, Memorial Day did not become an official federal holiday until 1971, more than a century after the war ended. This is the same year the holiday was officially designated as taking place on the last Monday in May. The designation has periodically

drawn the ire of veterans and military supporters who suggest it is now more widely seen as the unofficial beginning to summer and not a day in which the sacrifices of fallen U.S. soldiers are honored to the extent that they should be.

- Debate exists about which town has the longest history of celebrating Memorial Day. A handful of towns claim to be the first celebrants of Memorial Day. That debate figures to continue in perpetuity, but History.com notes that Waterloo, New York, was officially rec-

ognized by U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson as the birthplace of Memorial Day in 1966. Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and Rochester, Wisconsin are some other towns that claim to have celebrated Memorial Day since the mid-1860s.

Memorial Day has a rich history that highlights the importance of honoring the men and women who have given their lives while in service of the United States military.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

It took a long time for Memorial Day to become a federal holiday. Despite tracing its origins to the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, Memorial Day did not become an official federal holiday until 1971.

GRILLING

Take your Memorial Day burgers up a notch

Memorial Day celebrations often take place in the backyard by the grill, and this year marks a perfect opportunity to expand your culinary repertoire. This recipe for “Best Burger With Blue Cheese Butter” courtesy of Eric Treuille and Birgit Erath’s “Grilling” (DK Publishing) offers a new take on a backyard barbecue staple.

Best Burger With Blue Cheese Butter

Serves 4
1 pound ground chuck steak
2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon black pepper
4 ½-inch slices blue cheese butter (see below)

4 sesame hamburger buns, halved

Combine ground steak with salt and pepper. Divide into 4 equal-sized pieces and gently shape into 4 burgers about 1-inch-thick. Grill burgers and warm buns according to instructions below. Top burgers with butter and serve hot in sesame buns.

Outdoor cooking:

Grill over hot coals for 3 minutes per side for rare, 4 minutes per side for medium rare, or 5 minutes per side for well done. Place buns cut

side down on grill until warm and lightly golden, 1 minute.

Indoor cooking:

Preheat a ridged cast-iron grill pan over high heat. Cook for 3 minutes per side for rare, 4 minutes per side for medium rare, or 5 minutes per side for well done. Place buns cut side down on grill pan until warm lightly golden, 1 minute.

Blue-Cheese Butter

Makes 15 servings

16 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

4 ounces (1 cup crumbled) blue cheese

2 teaspoons black pepper

Place ingredients in a food processor or blender; pulse until well blended. Wrap in foil. Place in the freezer until hard, about 45 minutes. To serve, roll back foil and cut into ½-inch slices. When slicing from frozen, warm the knife under hot water first. After slicing, always tightly rewrap the unused flavored butter roll in the foil before returning to refrigerator or freezer.

Best Burger Variations

▪ Herbed Burger: Add 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves or 1 teaspoon dried thyme, 1 crushed garlic clove and 1 tablespoon

finely chopped onion to the ground steak.

▪ Spicy Burger: Add ½ teaspoon tabasco, 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce and 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard to the ground steak.

Think ahead:

Shape burgers up to 1 day in advance. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Cooks’ Note: Overhandling the meat when shaping will result in a tough, dry burger. To guarantee a juicy burger, handle the meat as little as possible.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

This recipe for “Best Burger With Blue Cheese Butter” courtesy of Eric Treuille and Birgit Erath’s “Grilling” (DK Publishing) offers a new take on a backyard barbecue staple.

HOME MAINTENANCE

4 ways to prepare your home for bug season

Spring is the official start to bug season, making it important to prepare your home. Here are four steps you can take to keep bugs at bay:

1 . Do a spot check: Check window and door screens for tears to prevent flying bugs from getting in the home and make repairs where neces-

sary. Also, take a quick look around for areas with standing water and try to eliminate them. Standing water creates a breeding ground for mosquitos. Lastly, even the sturdiest garbage bags can't entirely prevent leaks and spills, and over time, your trash bins can begin to accumulate residue inside and around the rim. Bugs, es-

pecially flies, love leftovers, so give your garbage cans a thorough rinse.

2 . Be ready: Put an effective pest control product in your shopping cart early in the season so you're ready when you see the first sign of bugs in your home. If you see one cockroach, chances are there are

more hiding in nooks and crannies. It's hard to put a pin on how many, but an old saying is that for every one you do see, there are 10 more you don't. Striking at the first sign of ants or roaches can help you avoid big problems down the line, as these insects can multiply very quickly. One solid choice is Zevo Instant Action Bug Killer

Spray. Zevo's BioSelective Technology targets and shuts down biological pathways found in bugs, not in people or pets. Easy to use, just spray on pests, then wipe up the dead bugs, as well as any excess product. Zevo is now available nationwide at The Home Depot and Target, and online at zevoinsect.com.

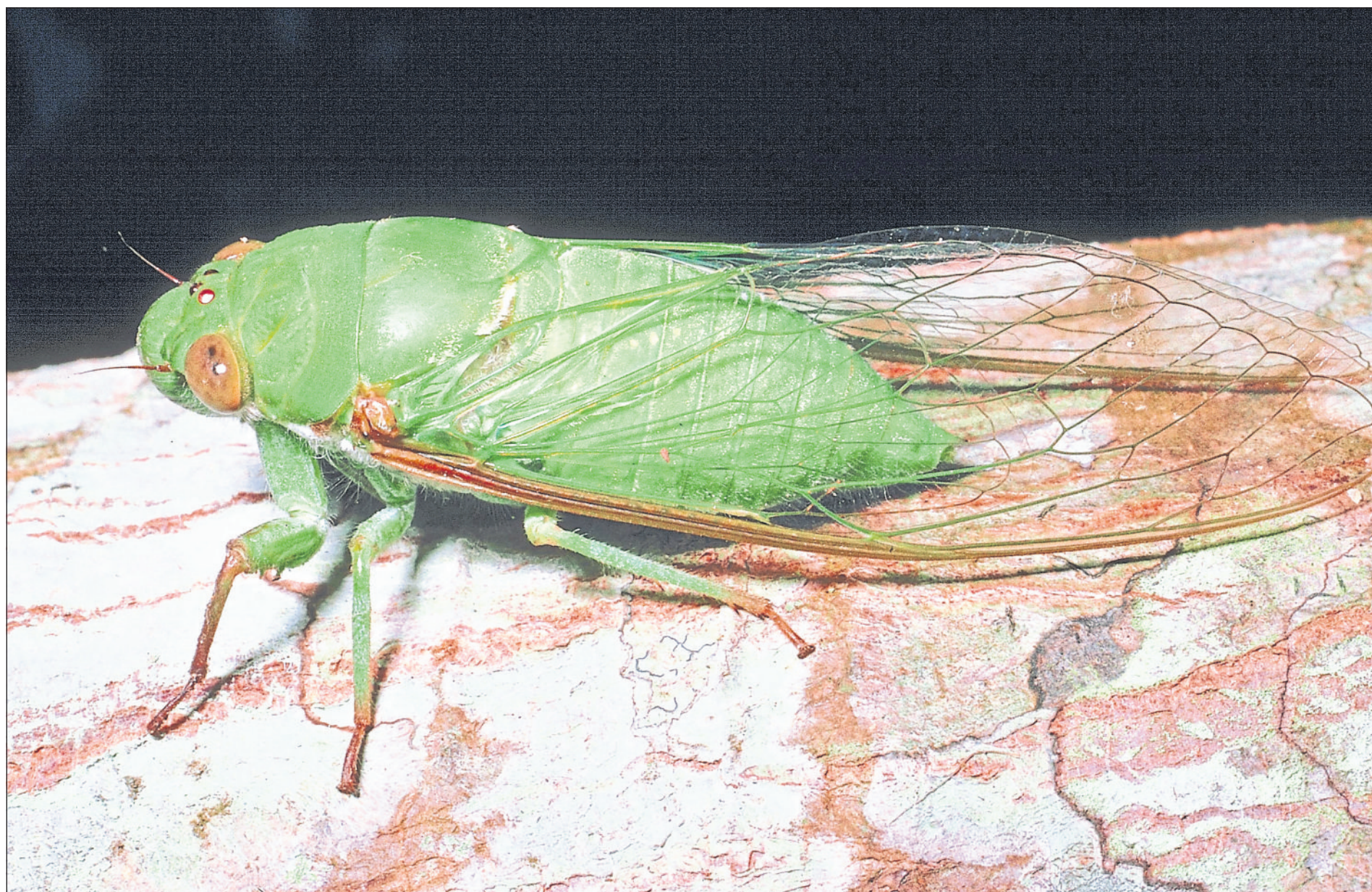


PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Prepare for the upcoming visit of the 17-year cicadas by protecting small and vulnerable trees with cheesecloth.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

During the spring season, it is necessary to take steps both to keep bugs out, and to be ready if they do invade.

3 . Protect your trees: Prepare for the upcoming visit of the 17-year cicadas. In many parts of the country, billions of cicadas will swarm and the females will scrape small twigs to lay their eggs under bark. Protect small and vulnerable trees (ones that are un-

der 4 or 5 feet tall) with cheesecloth to spare them from attack.

4 . Keep an eye on pets. Pets are liable to gobble up large helpings of dead cicadas. While not toxic, too many cicadas could cause some digestive is-

suues for furry friends. Help keep them healthy by watching what they eat!

During the spring season, it is necessary to take steps both to keep bugs out, and to be ready if they do invade.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

Striking at the first sign of ants or roaches can help you avoid big problems down the line, as these insects can multiply quickly.

HOME ORGANIZATION

Try these 5 tips to get your garage organized — and keep it that way

Is your garage in disarray? While you dream of a perfectly organized workbench or garage, your reality probably looks more like a sea of random toys, boxes and exercise equipment.

Every do-it-yourselfer knows a clean, organized garage is the key to efficient project planning and repairs around the home. As we head into warmer months,

set aside the time to take charge of the space and finally create a sense of tidiness that will last year-round.

Follow these five tips to tame the mess and get your garage back in shape:

1 . Invest in shelving that accommodates clear storage bins. When it comes to orga-

nizing and storing the assortment of cords, car care items, paint supplies and kid's toys littering your garage, nothing does the job better than clear storage bins. Not only can you categorize items by project or activity type, you can also easily stack them to save space without sacrificing the ability to easily find what you need, when you need

it. Invest in taller, wider shelving for the perimeter of the garage to accommodate your chosen bins.

2 . Fix or dispose of anything broken or past its prime. There's nothing worse than scrambling to find a specific tool or product in an urgent situation, only to realize it's broken,

damaged or dried out. As you organize, pay attention to textures, consistencies and expiration dates. Toss and replace any items that have seen better days. For broken tools that seem salvageable, like cracked hoses or broken handles, reach for a professional grade, heavy-duty duct tape like T-Rex Tape to tackle the repair.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Every do-it-yourselfer knows a clean, organized garage is the key to efficient project planning and repairs around the home.

3 . Utilize ceiling and wall space with hanging storage. From bicycles and skis to rakes and shovels, some equipment is better off stored up and out of your way. Install hanging racks or shelving above the area where you park your vehicles to store larger, heavier equipment, and use a double-sided mounting tape to attach hooks along the sides of your garage for lighter-weight items.

4 . Stock up on the essentials so you can make repairs on the fly. While it's great to have a wide assortment of tools and supplies, for many projects and repairs you really just need the basics – think max-strength waterproof tape, bungee cords, a hammer, nails and similar essentials. Use these items as the foundation of your garage workstation and stock up on extras to keep on-hand for emergencies, camping and other on-the-go uses.

5 . Give everything a home. Aim to group supplies for similar activities, tasks and repairs together, giving each category a “home.” In addition to helping keep things organized in dedicated spaces, hanging frequently used tools and supplies on hooks or pegboard can make it easier to quickly scan the garage and find exactly what you need. Use your mounting tape to safely and securely create a space to store and display all your go-to items.

Interested in more solutions for all your home and DIY needs? Visit trextape.com for a wide variety project and repair ideas.

Whether you're working on your car or tackling a weekend DIY project, having all your tools and supplies in order will make all the difference.

*Story courtesy of
StatePoint Media*

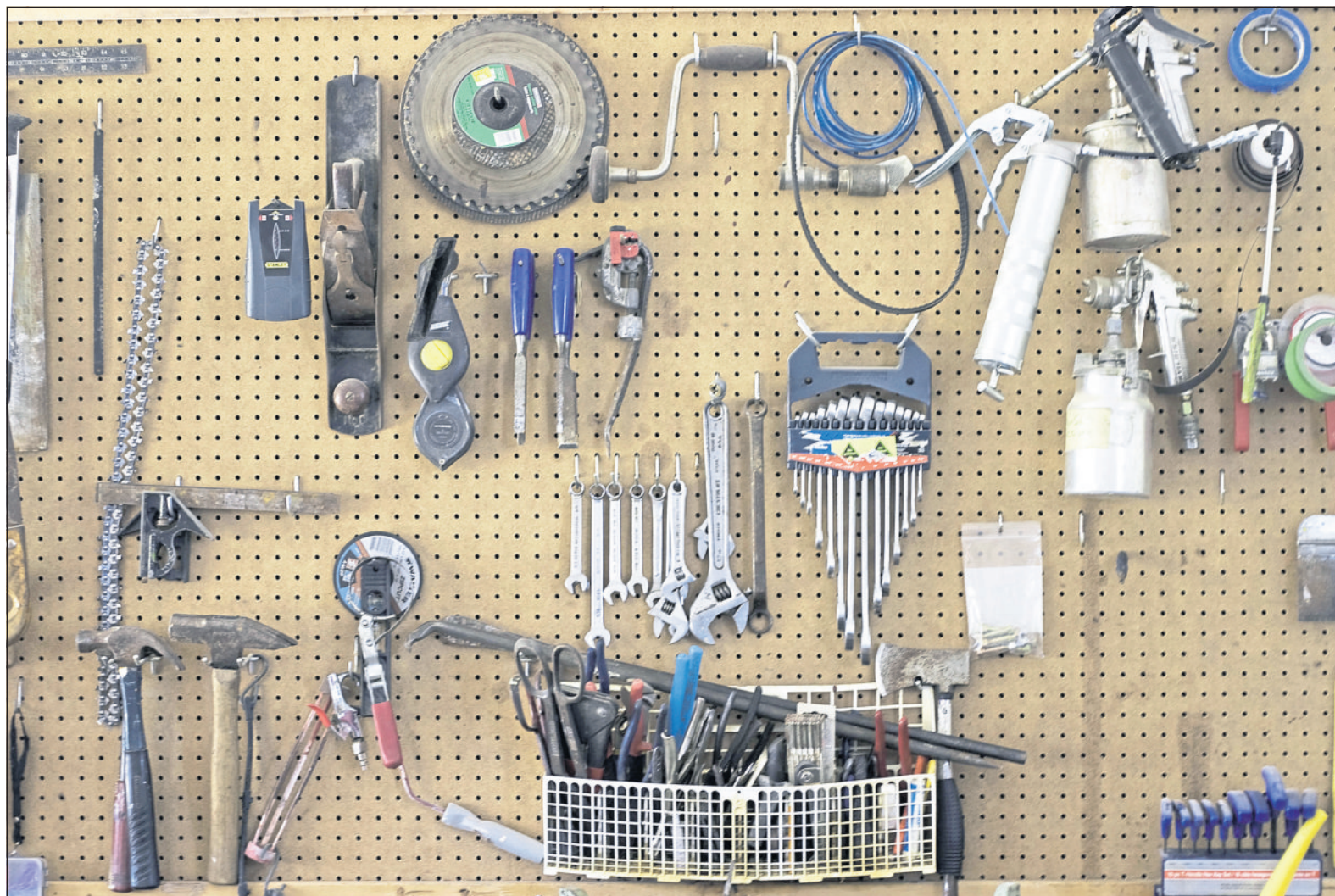


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Whether you're working on your car or tackling a weekend DIY project, having all your tools and supplies in order will make all the difference.



Fix or dispose of anything broken or past its prime. There's nothing worse than scrambling to find a specific tool or product in an urgent situation, only to realize it's broken, damaged or dried out.

SUMMER SAFETY

Launch your boat into a new season



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAMILY FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES

After several months in storage, it's a good idea to give your boat a thorough inspection so you can identify any holes, cracks or dings that may impact its performance or safety.

Whether you're racing against the waves or quietly floating with a pole in hand, a day on the water is hard to beat. However, before you can enjoy the excitement of a new season, there are several steps you need to take to make sure your boat is ready for the ride.

System Check

Your boat's fuel and electric systems need an experienced eye to determine potential problems. Cracked or damaged hoses and connections need to be replaced, and all fittings and clamps should be checked to ensure they're tight

and secure. Test exhaust and ventilation systems, and replace worn or loose belts and cables, giving special attention to the steering and throttle cables. If you didn't change the oil and filter before putting your boat in storage, do so before the season begins. Also be sure to check oil, power steer-

ing fluid and coolant levels as well as running lights and emergency features such as horns.

Battery Function

A reliable power source is essential for powering your trolling motor and operating accessories like fish finders when your

engine isn't running. You'll need to test your battery before heading out on the water. If it's time for a replacement, look for a powerful and cost-efficient option like Interstate Batteries' Enhanced Flooded Deep-Cycle Marine Battery. The battery features a durable design with extended battery



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAMILY FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES

There are several safety steps boat owners should take before enjoying the excitement of a new boating season.

life and includes a two-year, free replacement warranty.

Visual Inspection

After several months in storage, it's a good idea to give your boat a thorough inspection so you can identify any holes, cracks or dings that may impact its performance or safety. Scan the hull closely to for any abnormalities and check the propeller, as even minor dings and scratches can affect its operation.

Careful Cleaning

Depending on the security of your storage space and how you covered your boat, you may not have much heavy cleaning to do. However, it's a good idea to start the season fresh by giving everything a

thorough wipe down. This can help illuminate any problems you may have overlooked during your visual inspection. In addition, using UV protectant on exposed surfaces can help prevent damage such as cracks and fading caused by harsh sunlight.

Safety Supplies

Before you hitch the trailer, take inventory of your on-board safety supplies. Be sure your life jackets are in good condition and that you have options to appropriately fit all passengers. Check fire extinguishers to ensure they're in good working order and test the carbon monoxide detector (or add one if there's not already a detector installed). Also scan your safety kit; update any expired items and replenish your sup-

ply of bandages or other items that may be running low.

Find more information to get your summer on the water underway at interstatebatteries.com.

Finding the Best Battery for Your Boat

No matter how you spend your time on the water, a durable and reliable battery is a must. Learn what kind of battery is best for your boating needs from the experts at Interstate Batteries:

- **Starting:** Whether you're sailing the ocean or ripping it up in a motorboat, starting batteries are built to withstand most marine conditions.

- **Deep-Cycle:** These batteries are the

most popular line of marine batteries and offer strong, reliable power. This type of battery is used to start your trolling motor and power other accessories like fish finders whether your engine is running or not.

- **Dual-Purpose:** Originally developed for military tanks and submarines, this type of battery has the staying power of a deep-cycle battery coupled with high-cranking performance.

- **Powersport:** When you're trying to catch every wave, the last thing you want is a weak battery. These top-quality batteries are built to withstand the most rugged conditions on the water.

Story courtesy of Family Features/Interstate Batteries

SUMMER SAFETY

Practice fireworks safety this summer

The arrival of warm weather provides more opportunities to gather and celebrate. From national holidays to impromptu backyard barbecues, the opportunity to kick back and relax is a hallmark of summer.

Fireworks also figure prominently in summer.

When in the hands of professionals, fireworks are a wonder to behold from a safe distance. But far too often people set off their own pyrotechnics and meet with grave results.

In 2017, hospital emergency rooms in the United States treated an estimated 12,900 people for fireworks-

related injuries. Of those injuries, 54% were to the extremities and 36% were head injuries. Children under the age of 15 accounted for more than one-third of those injuries, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

The risk for serious injury is significant anytime

fireworks are handled. That is why individuals need to be especially careful when handling fireworks.

Keep children away

Never allow young children to ignite or play with fireworks. Even sparklers can be dangerous. Experts say sparklers burn at tem-

peratures between 1800 F and 3000 F, which is hot enough to melt metal. Most people wouldn't let children touch a stove set to 350 F, so they must exercise the same caution when using sparklers.

Children may not realize that fireworks can remain hot even after the col-

ors have disappeared. Some fireworks considered "duds" can unexpectedly reignite, even after being moved.

Exercise caution

Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby in case of fire or to douse used fireworks before discarding them. When setting off fire-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

When shopping for fireworks, buy them only from reputable sources and avoid fireworks packaged in plain brown wrapping, which is normally indicative of fireworks designed for professional displays and not home use.



Fireworks safety is vital to preventing injuries and accidents.

works, never point or throw fireworks at another person. Individuals should keep a safe distance immediately after lighting fireworks.

When shopping for fireworks, buy them only from reputable sources and avoid fireworks packaged in plain brown wrapping, which is normally indicative of fireworks designed for professional displays and not home use.

Additional safety measures

The following are some additional measures when handling fireworks.

- Never use fireworks when un-

der the influence.

- Never ignite devices inside of a container.
- Maintain a safe distance from people, houses and flammable materials when using fireworks.
- Wear protective eyewear when using fireworks.
- Make sure fireworks are legal in your area prior purchasing them.
- Strongly consider leaving displays to professionals.

Fireworks safety is vital to preventing injuries and accidents.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



When in the hands of professionals, fireworks are a wonder to behold from a safe distance.

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HOME MAINTENANCE

Techniques to keep mosquitoes out of your backyard oasis



Various strategies can help homeowners keep mosquitos out of their backyards.

The value of a retreat-like backyard was never more apparent than in 2020. Over the last year-plus, much of the world has been forced to stay home as a global pandemic has claimed millions of lives while countless others have had to fight to survive in hospitals. It's no surprise people have looked for a respite from the harsh realities of living during a deadly pandemic, and many turned their attention to their own backyards to provide such an escape.

The online home remodeling platform Houzz reported a 58% annual increase in project leads for home professionals in June 2020. Contractors who specialize in outdoor spaces saw the biggest increase in demand. A revamped outdoor space can provide the perfect retreat for homeowners who want to get away from it all. But one winged, unwelcome guest can quickly transform an oasis into an uninviting space.

Mosquitoes make their presence felt in many areas each summer. These pesky, often hungry insects can carry disease, and their bites can be painful and itchy. Homeowners can try these three techniques to keep mosquitoes out of their backyards.

1. Remove standing water

Standing water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes, who don't even need a lot of water to successfully breed. A daily walk around the property may uncover kids' toys, empty flower pots or other small receptacles that can collect water. Even clogged gutters can lead to the accumulation of a small amount of water, and that can be enough for mosquitoes to breed. Remove these potential breeding grounds when you find them, and do so each day, as mosquitoes mature from eggs to nymphs in roughly four days.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The home remodeling experts at HGTV note that plants can be part of homeowners' strategy to repel mosquitoes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Mosquitoes can make it hard to enjoy a backyard oasis.

2. Mow regularly

Mowing the lawn so the grass never gets too high is another way to make a backyard less hospitable to mosquitoes. The pest experts at Terminix® note that mosquitoes seek tall grass to protect them from the elements, including wind and hot summer sun.

Mowing enough so grass never gets too high in summer can make backyards less inviting to mosquitoes.

3. Plant with mosquitoes in mind

The home remodeling experts at HGTV note that plants can be part of home-

owners' strategy to repel mosquitoes. Various plants have mosquito-repellant qualities. For example, bee balm releases a fragrance as it grows, and mosquitoes don't like that fragrance. Homeowners can speak with a local lawn and garden professional for recommendations about plants that can thrive in their region and

repel mosquitoes at the same time.

Mosquitoes can make it hard to enjoy a backyard oasis. But various strategies can help homeowners keep these unwanted guests out of their backyards.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

Mosquitoes make their presence felt in many areas each summer. These pesky, often hungry insects can carry disease, and their bites can be painful and itchy.

GRILLING

BACKYARD BARBECUE

4 tips for success

When the weather warms up, the opportunities to enjoy more time outdoors increase. For many people that means firing up the grill to cook dinners in the backyard and also to host friends and family for outdoor gatherings around the patio.

Barbecuing is enjoyed around the world and is especially popular in the United States, where even presidents have touted the virtues of cooking outside. Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter and even Ronald Reagan hosted barbecues with tasty grilled or

smoked food during their terms.

Barbecues are especially popular in spring and summer. Memorial Day often marks the unofficial kickoff to the summer barbecue season. After Memorial Day weekend, the smell of barbecue often can be detected on a nightly

basis in suburban neighborhoods. Follow these tips to make backyard barbecues even more successful this year.

1 . Make food safety a priority. A successful barbecue is one in which everyone goes home

sated and stuffed with delicious foods. However, ensuring people don't fall ill also is vital. Keep in mind that the temperature outdoors impacts the rate of spoilage for raw and cooked foods. Always keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold (place items on



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Make the most of barbecue season by embracing strategies to be successful hosts and hostesses.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Memorial Day often marks the unofficial kickoff to the summer barbecue season.

ice or in coolers). The Food and Drug Administration, advises moving leftovers indoors promptly and discarding any items that have been sitting outside for longer than two hours at room temperature. Items should be moved indoors or discarded even more quickly in especially hot conditions.

2 . Learn how to smoke. Grilling is one skill, and smoking is another. As the popularity of food smokers has increased, prices have come down. Novices can visit barbecue competitions and talk to professionals

about their tips for smoking foods, or learn more by watching tutorials online. Smoked foods take a lot of time to cook, allowing hosts an opportunity to mingle with guests.

3 . Keep things simple. Serve only a handful of items to cut down on the amount of preparation required. Two main proteins and maybe three side dishes is adequate. Chips or other pre-made snacks can fit the bill. Condensing options also reduces how much you have to manage. Be sure to have options for those with food aller-

gies or intolerances when planning the menu.

4 . Set up clusters of seating. Grouping sets of chairs at tables around the yard encourages guests to mingle. Also, it helps space out people for social distancing and avoids a bottleneck around the food.

Make the most of barbecue season by embracing strategies to be successful hosts and hostesses.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

Barbecuing is enjoyed around the world and is especially popular in the United States, where even presidents have touted the virtues of cooking outside. Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter and even Ronald Reagan hosted barbecues with tasty grilled or smoked food during their terms.

LAWN & GARDEN

How and why to build a raised garden bed this season

Fairly easy to construct and even easier to maintain, raised garden beds are a great way to raise plants and vegetables in the comfort and convenience of your backyard.

In a recent episode of the Ex-

mark Original Series, “Done-in-A-Weekend-Extreme,” landscape designer and show host, Doug Scott, spoke to organic gardener Joe Lamp’l of “Growing a Greener World” about the ins and outs of raised garden beds.

Here are some of the top insights and tips Lamp’l shared.

- Why use raised garden beds? A raised garden bed can help facilitate the ideal growing environment, as most people don’t have that perfect soil naturally

in their yard. Their accessibility makes them easier to work in and maintain. Plus, they’re a nice architectural design element in any landscape.

- What’s the ideal size? The main rule of the thumb applies to

width. The bed should be no wider than 4 feet, as you never want to compact the soil when working. Length however, is based on personal preference and needs. As far as height is concerned, you want the roots to be able to grow out



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

For an amazing crop this season, take a cue from the professionals and build a raised garden bed for best results.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Build your raised garden bed on level ground, in full sun exposure near a water supply.

and down as much as possible — 6-inches at minimum. While 12-inches is common, anything higher is a bonus.

▪ What materials work best? Treated lumber is the most readily available and economical material and will likely last the longest, however, being an organic gardener Lamp'l prefers untreated hardwood, as it lasts almost as long and doesn't contain chemicals. Other materials you have around the home and yard, such as rocks, old tubs, etc., can work too.

▪ Where's the best location? Build your raised garden bed on level ground, in full sun exposure near a water supply.

DIY Instructions

To build a 10-foot x 4-foot x 18-inch raised bed, you'll need:

- Nine 6-inch x 6-inch x 12-foot cedar timbers
- Tape measure, t-square and marking pencil
- A saw and extension cord
- One box of 10-inch heavy-duty exterior wood screws
- Ten 24-inch x ½-inch rebar stakes
- Twenty 10-inch galvanized timber spikes
- Sledgehammer
- Impact drill and long drill bit
- Level
- Hammer

- Shovels
- Hardware cloth, wire cutters and fence staples
- Work gloves, safety glasses and ear plugs
- Wheelbarrow (to transport soil)

1 . Begin by cutting six, 6 x 6 timbers, each measuring 10-feet 6-inches in length. And six, 6 x 6 timbers, each measuring 4-feet 6-inches in length. Drill rebar holes in each timber.

2 . Once the first layer of bed has been placed, leveled and squared in your desired location, fasten the corners using

10-inch wood screws. Secure the entire layer to the ground with 10 pieces of rebar.

3 . Place the second layer of timbers, staggering the corners and fastening them with wood screws. Secure this layer to the first with ten 10-inch galvanized spikes.

4 . Install galvanized cloth to prevent burrowing pests from eating earthworms and destroying plants.

5 . Place the third layer of timbers (following above directions.)

6 . Fill with soil and plants.

For more tips and complete build instructions, check out "How to Build Raised Garden Beds" by visiting Exmark.com/backyard. Exmark's Backyard Life is part of a unique multimedia destination with a focus on helping homeowners make the most of their backyard. There you can also access other series, including "Prime Cuts" and "Dream Yards."

For an amazing crop this season, take a cue from the professionals and build a raised garden bed for best results.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

HOME DECOR

Get your patio ready for summer living



PHOTO COURTESY OF STATEPOINT MEDIA

With a few stylish upgrades, you can get your patio in tip top shape for summer.

It's time to extend your home's living spaces to the outdoors. To get your patio prepped for a summer of relaxation and fun, consider the following décor ideas and inspiration:

The Entryway

Your patio will be more enticing if you have beautiful sliding glass patio doors leading to it. If you do go in for this upgrade, it's important to know that patio doors can be customized in a number of ways that affect their look and function. To help you make sense of your options, shop with manufacturers that offer visualizer tools, such as the one available at ProVia, provia.com/

app. This can help you see what colors and hardware look best in your home and find the combination you like best.

Their Aeris wood and vinyl sliding doors, for example, offer many customization opportunities, including wood stain finishes, interior and exterior colors; options for internal grids and internal blinds; and a wide array of decorative glass, privacy glass and tinted glass options.

Beyond beauty, be sure to prioritize high performance, particularly when it comes to energy efficiency, storm protection, and of course, smooth, easy and quiet operation. After all, it's hard to feel relaxed if simply

getting outdoors is a struggle.

Exterior Decorating

Boost comfort and ambiance by applying the same attention to detail when decorating your patio as you would indoors. Beyond furniture that's comfortable enough to lounge on all day or evening, incorporate throws, pillows and even rugs. Add splashes of color and vibrancy by hanging outdoor wall art, or, if you're feeling extra creative, painting a mural.

Paper lanterns hung above your patio dining area can bring a touch of romance to meals enjoyed outdoors. And get inspired by the nature around you by en-

suring your patio features greenery. Potted and hanging plants or even ivy, jasmine or roses grown against a wall or all good choices.

Beauty Inspired by Nature

These days, manufactured stone is not just for the side of your home. The possibilities for using it in and around the patio are endless. Add drama to a boundary wall between the patio and yard; beautify your outdoor kitchen's grill unit, pizza oven, table or island; and enhance seating around the fire pit or fireplace and the bases of pergolas or columns.

Just be sure to select products that look like authentic stone even upon careful inspection, and

are designed to withstand the elements. For example, the choices available from ProVia are artfully crafted to produce a realistic, dramatic effect, mimicking stones from unique geographic regions in a range of cuts. Unlike other options on the market, their colors permeate throughout the entire stone, giving every manufactured stone a realistic look with hues that last for years. To learn more, visit provia.com/stone.

With a few stylish upgrades, you can get your patio in tip top shape for summer.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

SUMMER SAFETY

Summer safety tips for your pet

From heat waves to fireworks, summer can take a toll on pets' emotional and physical wellness. According to some pet experts, the heart of relief for a number of common seasonal pet woes is CBD. Here are some insights into how to use it, plus additional measures you can take for a safe, healthy summer with pets.

▪ **Fireworks and Thunder:** Unexpected noises can be extremely frightening for pets, causing what's known as situational stress. If possible, try administering Calming CBD-infused Edibites, which contains soothing and relaxing properties, about an hour before you expect fireworks or thunderstorms to occur. (Helpful hint: it can also be used to relieve situational stress associated with travel, guests, etc.)

Exercise also helps. Whether you take an extra long walk or play fetch, wearing your pet out earlier in the day might help them stay calm or even sleep through noise disruptions. Additionally, you can prepare by setting up a quiet space for your pet, full of their favorite blankets and toys. Finally, be mindful that pets often react to loud noises by running away. According to the ASPCA, one-in-five pets that go missing run off after hearing loud noises like fireworks. Bring cats indoors during storms and fireworks. If you must take a dog outside, keep them securely leashed. Microchips and up-to-date ID tags can help you safely reunite with your pet should they go missing.

▪ **Heat:** If you're sweating, there's a good chance your pet is too. Keep pets hydrated by constantly refilling their bowls with fresh, clean water. Choose mornings or evenings for exercising with dogs to avoid the hottest part of the day. On scorches, avoid paw-to-pavement contact, letting your dog walk in the grass instead. If your pup's paws do get affected by the hot pavement, applying a topical CBD solution such as Canna Care from Pet Releaf can help relieve the burn. Fi-

nally, beat the heat with regular grooming — however, don't shave your pet's fur — their coat protects them from sunburn.

▪ **Allergies:** Allergies can wear pets down in numerous ways, including weakening their immune system. CBD hemp oil however can offer an immunity boost by activating the body's two-way communication system between the brain and the immune system.

A common allergy symptom is rash, which can cause pets to scratch and bite their skin, only worsening irritation. To treat rash, consider using CBD hemp oil to support a healthy inflammatory response and ease stress, along with a topical CBD product to soothe skin irritations.

▪ **Hip and Joint Discomfort:** Summer may mean an uptick in nature hikes and long days at the dog park. As a result, your dog may experience hip or joint discomfort. Consider adding a beneficial supplement to their everyday regimen, like Hip & Joint Edibites, which contains full-spectrum hemp extract with naturally occurring CBD, along with glucosamine and chondroitin, a combination known to help maintain normal healthy cartilage and joint function, as well as support joint flexibility and mobility. Depending on your pet's health needs, you may want to upgrade to a higher potency pet CBD product like a hemp oil that you can massage onto their joints.

Unsure which CBD solution will work best for your pet? Check out Pet Releaf's Product Finder tool at petreleaf.com/product-finder, which factors in age, weight, level of discomfort and wellness needs. Use the code RELEAF25 through July 31, 2021 to receive 25% off and free shipping.

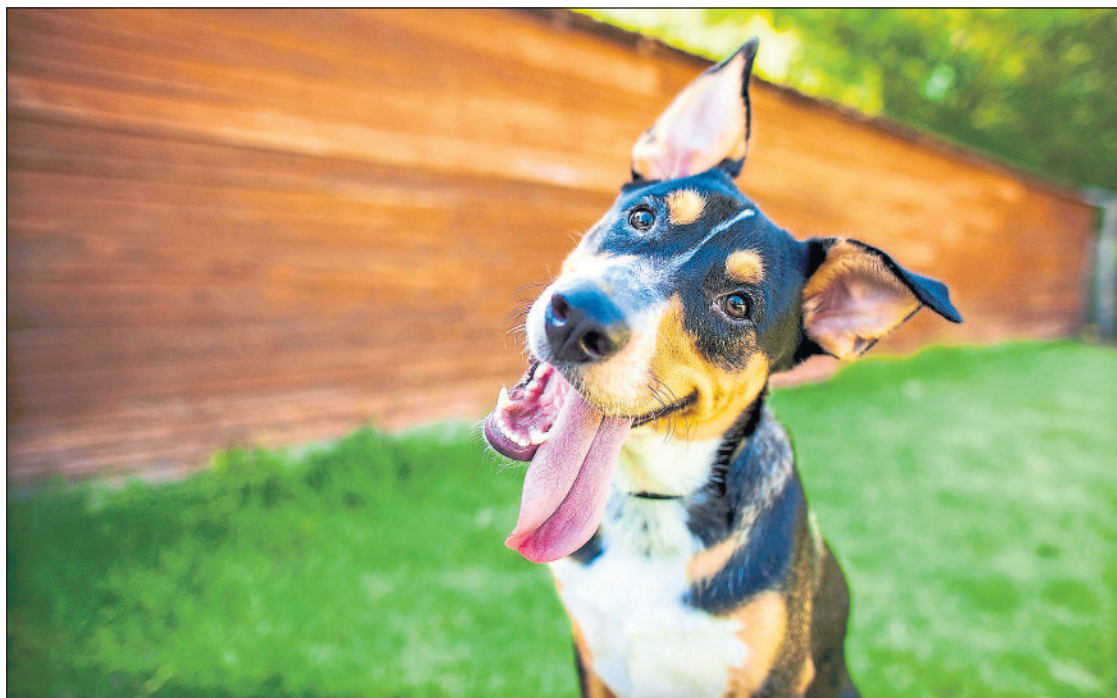
With the right tools and knowledge, you can support your pet's wellness this summer and protect them from common seasonal health and safety hazards.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

From heat waves to fireworks, summer can take a toll on pets' emotional and physical wellness.



With the right tools and knowledge, you can support your pet's wellness this summer.

SUMMER SAFETY

How to respond to pesticide poisoning

Tending to a lawn and garden can be a great way to spend time in the great outdoors. It's also an enjoyable way to improve a home's curb appeal.

Though many homeowners prefer a wholly organic approach to lawn care and gardening, sometimes pests and other problems force people to apply pesticides around their properties. The application of pesticides can make homeowners, and anyone who spends time on their properties, including children, vulnerable to pesticide poisoning.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, people exposed to pesticides may exhibit a host of symptoms. External irritants that come into contact with the skin can cause redness, itching or pimples, and such substances also may contribute to allergic reactions marked by redness, swelling or blistering. Stinging and swelling in the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, mouth, and throat also may occur after being exposed to pesticides.

Pesticides also can cause internal injuries to a person's organs, potentially leading to significant issues. The EPA notes that the lungs, stomach and nervous system all can be affected when pesticides are swallowed, inhaled or absorbed through the skin. People experiencing lung injuries after exposure to pesticides may experience shortness of breath, heavy salivation (drooling) or rapid breathing. Injuries to the stomach may lead to symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, or diarrhea. If the nervous system is affected by pesticide exposure, people may experience excessive fatigue, sleepiness,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The application of pesticides can make homeowners, and anyone who spends time on their properties, including children, vulnerable to pesticide poisoning.

headache, muscle twitching, and numbness.

If pesticide poisoning is suspected, it's imperative that someone, be it the person who was poisoned, the parent of a child who may have been exposed or a medical professional treating the affected person, identify the type of poisoning that has occurred. That's because the EPA notes that the appropriate treatment will depend on the kind of poisoning that has occurred.

■ **Chemical burn on skin:** If treating a chemical burn

on the skin, the EPA advises drenching the skin with water for at least 15 minutes. All contaminated clothing should be removed and then skin and hair should be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water.

■ **Inhaled poison:** The response to an inhaled poison will depend on where the person is at the time of exposure. If outside, move the person away from any area recently treated with pesticide. If inside, move the person to fresh air immediately (doors and windows should ultimately be

opened to reduce the risk of others being exposed). Contact the local fire department if you think you need a respirator prior to helping the victim. If the victim is wearing tight clothing, loosen that clothing. Give artificial respiration to a victim whose skin is blue or if the victim has stopped breathing.

■ **Substance in the eye:** If a poison has entered the eye, wash the eye quickly and gently with cool running water for 15 minutes or more. Use only water and do not use eye drops, chem-

icals or drugs. It's imperative that people act quickly if a substance has gotten into the eye, as membranes in the eyes act faster than in any other external part of the body, and eye damage can occur within minutes of exposure.

■ **Substance on the skin:** Drench the skin with water for at least 15 minutes and then wash skin and hair thoroughly. Discard contaminated clothing or thoroughly wash it separate from other laundry.

■ **Swallowed pesticide:** If a pesticide has been swal-

lowed and the victim is still conscious, he or she should drink a small amount of water to dilute the pesticide. Only induce vomiting on the advice of a poison control center or physician.

Pesticide exposure can be very dangerous. It's imperative that people who plan to apply pesticides in their lawns and gardens learn how to respond if they or someone on their property is exposed to pesticides.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



LAWN & GARDEN

Lawn watering and fertilizing techniques



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

A well-fed and watered lawn will develop a better root system, which makes the lawn less vulnerable to stressors.

A lush, green lawn is a sight to behold. Many variables are involved in growing and maintaining grass, and water and fertilizer are among the most important components.

Knowing how much wa-

ter and fertilizer to apply and when to apply it can make a big difference in the appearance and health of a lawn. That's because a well-fed and watered lawn will develop a better root system, which makes the lawn

less vulnerable to stressors like drought, mowing, foot traffic, and heat, according to the Scotts® company.

Fertilize

There is no magic formula governing when to

fertilize a lawn. The type of grass and how well-established a lawn is must be considered. Experts suggest having the soil tested to determine its pH levels and if any nutrients are lacking. A fertilizing schedule

can then be developed after testing.

Keep in mind that overfeeding a lawn will not make it grow any better and actually can damage the turf. Several small applications of fertilizer dur-

ing the lawn's most active growing period may be helpful, advises the home improvement resource Tools Around the House. An annual application (late spring for warm-season grass or fall for cool-sea-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Knowing how much water and fertilizer to apply and when to apply it can make a big difference in the appearance and health of a lawn.

son grass) may be all that's needed.

Certain fertilizers need to be applied and watered in. Others may be combined with weed-control products and must be set on top of damp grass. Read packaging to determine the right

application.

Water

The right watering schedule and techniques can help a lawn thrive. Scotts® says adjusting for climate and nature can help grass to grow strongly. A lawn that has a

grayish cast or appears dull green is telling an owner that it needs water. Another test is to step on the lawn. If footprints disappear quickly, the grass blades have enough moisture to spring back.

Water the lawn in the morning before 10 a.m. when

it's cooler and the winds tend to be calm so that the water can soak in. For those who must water at night, do so in early evening so that the water can dry before nightfall and will not contribute to disease.

Scotts® says to water an

established lawn until the top six to eight inches of soil is wet. Most lawns need one to 1.5 inches of water per week from rain or a hose to soak the soil that deeply.

Newly established lawns may require more water to keep the soil moist but not

soggy.

Visit a lawn care center for more information on watering the type of lawn for your area or visit scotts.com for additional tips.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection.

LAWN & GARDEN

Low-maintenance lawn alternatives

A traditional lawn may not be right for every property nor desired by every homeowner. There is no denying that lawns take time and effort to establish and daily or weekly maintenance to thrive. Homeowners who find that a traditional lawn is not practical can explore some low-maintenance alternatives.

Wildflower meadow

Homeowners with wide swaths of property may discover meadows are cost- and time-efficient. Stores sell special wildflower meadow mixes of seeds or homeowners can use wildflower plug plants throughout areas where grasses are left to grow longer. This nat-

ural area can be a home to wildlife and an idyllic backdrop to a home. Most meadows only require a spring or summer and autumn cut to thrive and look good.

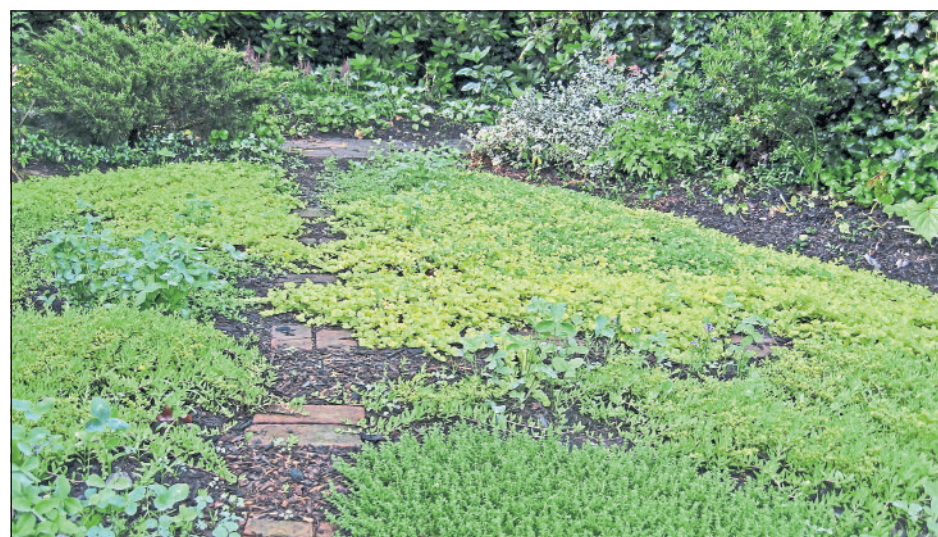
Ornamental grasses

Partition areas of the property for ornamental grasses to grow. The gardening resource

Elemental Green says ornamental grasses tend to be drought-resistant and low-maintenance. They won't need much fertilizer and are often resistant to pests as well. Ornamental grasses grow in tufts or sprays and will not require mowing. However, they are not ideal for areas that get foot traffic.

Moss

Moss can thrive in shady areas and ones where the soil tends to stay a bit damp. Moss is velvety soft and green, so it can mimic the look of a traditional lawn but won't require mowing and other upkeep. Because it spreads quickly, moss can take over quite



Above: Grass may be ideal for some, but there are alternatives for people who have troublesome landscapes or desire a low-maintenance product for their homes. **Below:** Ornamental grasses tend to be drought-resistant and low-maintenance.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FLICKR/GERRYKIFFE OF GARDENSOFT

If the desired look is a lawn without all the upkeep, there are various artificial grass options on the market.

rapidly. You will need to protect areas where you do not want moss by creating barriers to stop spread.

Gravel

Stone and gravel areas can reduce maintenance in the landscape and require very little upkeep. When gravel is installed correctly, weeds may not grow readily. Gravel installation may include laying heavy-duty, semi-permeable landscape fabric, which is available in home improvement centers. Gravel is cheaper than pavers and can be just as beautiful.

Artificial turf

If the desired look is a lawn without all the upkeep, there are various artificial grass options on the market. Homeowners who opt for artificial turf can save money and space devoted to lawn mowers and other lawn tools.

Grass may be ideal for some, but there are alternatives for people who have troublesome landscapes or desire a low-maintenance product for their homes.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



Homeowners with wide swaths of property may discover wildflower meadows are cost- and time-efficient.



Left: Homeowners who find that a traditional lawn is not practical can explore some low-maintenance alternatives. **Right:** Moss is velvety soft and green, so it can mimic the look of a traditional lawn but won't require mowing and other upkeep.



LAWN & GARDEN

Swimming pool landscaping ideas

Backyard pools provide a way to cool off and enjoy a taste of luxury without having to travel. Backyard pools provided even more convenience and a welcome respite in 2020, as many public pools were closed in response to social distancing restrictions put in place during the pandemic.

After installing pools, many homeowners realize that touching up the landscaping around the pool can provide the finishing touch to their backyard retreats. Not all landscaping is the same, and homeowners should choose

plants that look beautiful, are tolerant to pool splash-out and won't outgrow the area. The home and garden resource The Spruce notes that a plant that is attractive at two feet tall can grow rapidly and drop leaves or other debris into the pool.

When selecting options for pool landscaping, there are some considerations to keep in mind:

- Choose plants that will provide privacy.

- Know which kind of climate a plant needs prior to purchasing it. Tropical plants may be fitting poolside, but will they endure when the

season is over?

- Design according to the theme of the home, as plants should complement the existing style. Modern foliage may not blend well with a home styled after a traditional English cottage.

- Decide whether you can accept spreading or trailing plants that can cascade over retaining walls and other infrastructure.

- Look at trees that won't drop too many leaves, flowers or fruit into the water.

- Think about having layers of plants to soften the landscape,

which can make a small pool seem bigger and more luxurious, indicates the landscaping company Earth Development, Inc.

- Don't overlook the possibility of a lawn abutting pavers or concrete surrounding a pool, as it can soften the edges and keep spaces open and inviting.

- Incorporate herbs or fragrant plants, which can transform a pool day into a spa experience. Consider low-maintenance lavender as an option.

Pool landscaping must marry a variety of different features and

plant requirements. As a result, a professional consultation may be the route to take. Landscape architects will have the know-how to select plant varieties that will be tolerant, beautiful and fulfill homeowners' wishes.

Backyard pools can make a backyard retreat that much more enjoyable. Landscaping offers the softness and beauty that adds a finishing touch to poolside retreats.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Landscaping offers the softness and beauty that adds a finishing touch to poolside retreats.



When selecting options for pool landscaping, there are some considerations to keep in mind.

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Exterior lighting can add ambiance to a property



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Modern exterior lighting timers make it easier than ever to control the lights outside a home.

The value of the right lighting in a home is undeniable. Lighting can instantly transform a room and create the ambiance homeowners are looking to establish. Though it might be mostly seen as a way to create mood inside a home, lighting also can do much for lawns and gardens.

Backyards have come a long way over the last

several decades. Once reserved as play areas for children and stomping grounds for the family dog, backyards have become oases for homeowners and their families. Outdoor living areas are wildly popular, and no such area is complete without exterior lighting. In fact, a recent report from the National Association of Home

Builders found that 85 percent of home buyers want exterior lighting, making it the second most desired outdoor feature (patios topped that list).

Exterior lighting can have a dramatic effect on landscaping, and estimates from the online financial resource Kiplinger.com suggest such lighting is inexpensive, with instal-

lation averaging roughly \$67 per fixture.

When installing exterior lighting around their landscapes, homeowners can keep various tips in mind to create a relaxing, awe-inspiring mood on their properties at night.

- Consider uplights. Uplights are installed in the ground and direct light up at a tree, focusing on its

trunk or canopy. This creates a dramatic effect that makes it possible to enjoy majestic trees at night just like you might when spending time in the yard during the day.

- Focus on trees. Many homeowners already have exterior lighting lining their walkways and patios, but focusing on trees can create an entirely dif-

ferent look. Though it's possible to install exterior tree lighting on your own, landscaping professionals with lighting experience know which fixtures will pair most effectively with the trees around your property and how to arrange them for maximum effect.

- Opt for warm light. Warm white light creates



Exterior lighting can add significant appeal to a property without breaking the bank.

an inviting feel around the property. The exterior lighting experts at Utah Lights acknowledge that choice of lighting is up to homeowners but also note that, in sit-

uations with lower levels of ambient light, such as in exterior lights around a property, people typically prefer warmer light. That's because warm light tends to

be easier on the eyes and directs attention to the features of the landscape, which is many homeowners' goal when installing exterior lighting in their yards.

- Utilize a timer. Modern exterior lighting timers make it easier than ever to control the lights outside a home. Many such timers even adjust for the

changing seasons and the shifting hours of daylight. That means homeowners shouldn't have to tinker with the timer once it's set. Exterior lighting can add

significant appeal to a property without breaking the bank.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

SUMMER SAFETY

Safety first when power washing your home this spring

Spring cleaning is a great way for homeowners to clear their homes of clutter. As people spend extra time indoors in winter, items can quickly pile up around the house. Spring is a great time to clean up such clutter, but interior spaces are not the only areas of a home that can benefit from some extra attention once the weather warms up.

Harsh winters can take a toll on home exteriors. Dirt and grime can build up on exterior home surfaces over the course of the winter, affecting the appearance of the siding of a home as well as outdoor entertaining areas.

Power washing is a great way to give a home a fresh, clean look in spring. But there's more to power than simply renting the right equipment and getting to work. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that there are many risks associated with using power washers. For instance, the CDC says strong spray from power washers can cause serious wounds that initially seem minor. However, such wounds can lead to infection or disability if left untreated. In addition, if manufacturer safety instructions are not followed, electric shock can occur due to improper use.

Homeowners who are intending to power wash their own homes this spring should first determine if they're physically capable of doing so. Power washers can be difficult for some people to control, so it's imperative that homeowners honestly assess their physical abilities before renting a unit. The CDC urges homeowners who determine they can safely handle power washers to take these additional safety steps to make sure the process of cleaning their home exteriors goes



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Safety must remain the utmost priority when operating a power washer on your own.

smoothly.

- Never point a pressure washer at yourself or others.
- Do not attempt to push or move objects with spray from the washer. If anything is in your way, turn the power washer off and

then move the obstruction.

- Never use a gasoline powered washer in an enclosed space, which can increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Always test the ground

fault circuit interrupter

(circuit breaker or outlet) before using a pressure washer.

- Always plug a properly grounded pressure washer into a properly grounded receptacle.
- If an extension cord

must be used, keep the

pressure washer's power cord connection out of and away from any standing water, and use a heavy duty extension cord with components rated for use in wet locations. Keep both

the power cord and extension cord connections as far away as possible from the item being washed and away from any water runoff. While power washing, periodically take note of the location of the extension cord

connections to ensure they are not in a puddle.

- Wear rubber-soled shoes that provide some insulation when using the pressure washer.

- Never cut or splice the pres-

sure washer's power cord or extension cords.

- Never remove the grounding prong from the pressure washer's power cord plug or the extension cord.

- Pause the project if a cir-

cuit breaker is tripped. Always have a qualified electrician check the pressure washer for electrical problems after it has tripped a circuit breaker.

- Never allow children to operate a pressure washer. Keep

children at a safe distance when an adult is using a pressure washer.

Power washing can give a home a whole new look after a winter's worth of dirt and grime builds up on the home's

exterior. Safety must remain the utmost priority when operating a power washer on your own.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



Power washing is a great way to give a home a fresh, clean look in spring.

HOME IMPROVEMENT

How to add shade to a deck or patio

Homeowners eagerly await the arrival of the warm weather so they can cast off the remnants of cabin fever and bask in the sunshine. However, as summer nears its dog days, the same sun homeowners once coveted can contrib-

ute to uncomfortable conditions in outdoor entertaining spaces.

Meteorologists at WHAS11 in Kentucky took to their neighborhoods in July 2020 to test just how hot surfaces can get in the sun during peak daytime temper-

atures. Concrete sitting in the sun almost all day reached a temperature of 134.7 F, while the same concrete in the shade clocked in at just under 80 F. When air temperatures are around 90 F, unshaded concrete and asphalt can

be 125 F and 140 F, respectively. While wood decking may not be as hot as asphalt and concrete, it still can get steamy underfoot.

Homeowners who want to be able to enjoy their outdoor spaces in an array of temperatures can

think about investing in shade solutions. Sun-blocking ideas like awnings, shade trees and large umbrellas can help people enjoy their yards all day long.

▪ Canopy: A patio canopy is typically a freestanding unit that



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Left: Homeowners who want to be able to enjoy their outdoor spaces more should consider shade solutions. **Right:** Sun-blocking ideas like awnings, shade trees and large umbrellas can help people enjoy their yards all day long.

can be installed over a patio or a deck. Some people prefer to bolt it down so it will not be knocked over in windy conditions. The fabric on the canopy can be removed during the offseason, helping to improve its longevity.

- **Awning:** Awnings may be stationary or retractable. Many are installed directly onto a home and can cast shade on specific areas of outdoor entertaining spaces.

- **Shade sail:** Similar to an awning but a bit less structurally rigid, shade sails are large pieces of triangular fabric installed over areas of a patio, pool or landscape, according to The Family Handyman. Shade sails are light and airy and can be customized.

- **Trees:** A natural way to increase shade in a yard is to plant more shade trees. If sun glare is an issue all year long, and it's not just the heat of the sun that is troublesome, think about planting evergreen trees. Deciduous cousins will drop their leaves in fall and only be effective during the warm weather.

- **Patio umbrellas:** Many umbrellas start at around \$25. Umbrellas can be paired with patio tables, while stationary cantilever umbrellas sit out of the way on their own heavy-duty stands. A cantilever umbrella tends to provide more shade than patio table umbrellas.

- **Curtains:** Homeowners can block sunlight outdoors the way they do inside, offers MSN. Hang curtains from the sides of canopies or between posts on a deck to provide shade and cozy spaces.

Shade is in high demand when the sun is hot. Options abound for making outdoor areas more comfortable.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



Shade is in high demand when the sun is hot. Options abound for making outdoor areas more comfortable.

GRILLING

SENSATIONAL SIZZLE

How to master grilling a thick cut of meat

A thick cut of meat grilled over an open flame can make for a mouth watering meal. While such an endeavor likely won't lead to any complaints around the dinner table, many people still shy away from grilling especially thick cuts of meat.

A thick cut of uncooked meat can intimidate even the most devoted grilling enthusiast. Such

cuts tend to take a long time to cook, and many a grilling devotee has put in that time only to end up with a dried out piece of meat. So what do? The following are some ways to master the art of grilling thick cuts of meat.

- Reverse sear the steak. According to Omaha Steaks, reverse searing involves bringing the steak up to temperature via in-

direct heat first, then searing the outside second. Reverse searing ensures the outside of the steak does not become charred while the inside takes its time cooking. This requires using both direct and indirect heat. When using a gas grill with multiple burners, it's easy to create direct and indirect heating zones by only turning one set of burners on. When us-

ing a charcoal grill, move the hot coals to one side of the grill and leave the other side empty. Omaha Steaks recommends maintaining a grill temperature between 250 and 300 F and placing the meat over indirect heat first, keeping the steak there until a digital thermometer reads roughly 10 to 15 degrees below the desired temperature of the meat. The steak

can then be moved over direct heat so all sides can be seared.

- Salt the meat overnight. People hesitant to salt their meat out of fear of overconsumption of sodium should know that it's not necessary to use a lot of salt to create a flavorful piece of meat. A sprinkling of kosher salt over the surface of the meat is all that's necessary. Once the meat



Grilling aficionados need not be intimidated by thick cuts of meat.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

has been salted, store it in the refrigerator, uncovered, overnight, which allows ample time for the cut to fully absorb the salt, ultimately contributing to a juicy cut of meat.

▪ Be patient. Once the meat has been taken off the grill, let it sit for awhile before slicing into it. The goal is to allow the juice inside the meat to redistribute so each bite is as mouth watering as possible. This is the same principle that leads Thanksgiving cooks to let turkeys sit for awhile when they first come out of the oven. While turkeys may require roughly 30 minutes of sitting, meat typically only needs between 10 and 20 minutes, with thick cuts requiring more time than thin cuts.

Grilling aficionados need not be intimidated by thick cuts of meat. A few tricks of the trade can make it easy to serve up a thick piece of meat where each bite is juicy and full of flavor.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



Above: Many people shy away from grilling — especially thick cuts of meat — out of intimidation. **Below:** A few tricks of the trade can make it easy to serve up a thick piece of meat where each bite is juicy and full of flavor.



HOME IMPROVEMENT

Spruce Up for Spring: Fresh ideas for home upgrades

Spring means it's time to start sprucing up your home and garden with a little TLC inside and out. If you're unsure where to begin, consider these tips:

- **Make function a priority.** While aesthetic changes may boost value and please the eye, be sure to consider upgrades that make living easier, like organization units that give you more space or upgrades that create additional living space.

- **Keep budget in mind.** Make a list of the projects you'd like to complete and estimate how much each will cost. Use the list to determine what you can afford to complete now.

- **Do your research.** If you'll be making a significant purchase such as a new vacuum or grill, be sure to explore your options, read reviews and shop around for the best prices for greater confidence in what you choose.

- **Set yourself up for a more enjoyable spring** with more home and garden tips at eLivingtoday.com.

Hands Free Spring Cleaning

For busy households, an all in one vacuum and mop robot like the Deebot N8+ is a perfect daily companion to help automate spring cleaning. It features high suction power (but low noise), TrueMapping technology to create an efficient cleaning path and the OZMO Mopping System to remove 99.26% of bacteria with dual vacuuming and mopping. Controllable with a smartphone app, it includes an Auto Empty Station for months of hands- and maintenance-free cleaning. Learn more at ecovacs.com/us.

Enhance the Space

Under Your Deck

Optimize the space beneath an elevated deck by adding a drainage system such as Trex RainEscape. Designed to capture and divert water, this system protects a deck's substructure from moisture damage while creating dry space usable for storage or an additional living area. Homeowners can safely add gas lines and wiring to accommodate grills, appliances, ceiling fans, lights and entertainment components to create an outdoor oasis. For more information, visit TrexRainEscape.com.

Perfect Your Pantry

Cleaning out your pantry is an important step during spring cleaning as it allows you to discard expired items and rethink the space. Start by reorganizing and simplifying the area with ClosetMaid ventilated shelving like this Pantry Organizer. Built with the ShelfTrack system for a fully adjustable space along with close mesh to help prevent items from tipping over, it includes four 4-foot-by-16-inch shelves, a hang track and all necessary hardware. Find more information at closetmaid.com.

Get Ready to Grill

A grill's lifespan depends on many factors, including where and how it is stored and your climate. When it's time to upgrade, you'll have some decisions to make. The biggest is which heating style you prefer: gas, electric or charcoal. Other considerations include the overall size, number of burners and grate quality. Also be sure to compare available features, such as side burners and igniters, which are fairly common, and upgrades like lighting



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAMILY FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES

Make a list of the projects you'd like to complete and estimate how much each will cost. Use the list to determine what you can afford to complete now.

and fuel gauges.

When to Update Home and Garden Goods

Investing in quality products, properly maintaining and storing them all have an impact on how long

they'll stay in good working condition. As you tackle spring cleaning this year, take stock of your common

home and garden equipment to determine what may need updating.

- **Lawn Mower:** If your mower needs a repair that exceeds its value, it's time for a replacement. However, there may be other signs that an upgrade is warranted. Rough operation, frequent breakdowns or other indications of faulty performance deserve a second look. Before you buy new, remember to check your warranty to determine whether repairs might be covered.

- **Vacuum:** Many homeowners discard their used vacuum when it stops picking up dirt and debris as efficiently as it did originally. Before you move on, be sure to check that performance issues aren't the result of clogged hoses or a filter than needs cleaning or replacing. A belt may also be worn or need adjusting. Other signs it may be time to replace the vacuum include damaged or frayed cords, motor issues like overheating or making strange noises.

- **Grill:** A grill may last anywhere from 5-15 years, depending on the quality of the materials and how it is maintained. However, it's common to have to replace parts along the way. Signs you may need a new grill include a firebox (the main enclosure) with cracks, rust or holes and burners that distribute heat unevenly. Damaged grates can affect even grilling if they're warped or if they're flaky or rusted, they can contaminate food. If you're not able to replace the grates, or any other essential part, including hoses and connectors for a gas grill, you'll be better off replacing the unit.

Story courtesy of Family Features

MEMORIAL DAY

Rediscovering America: A quiz for Memorial Day

By Jennifer D. Keene
InsideSources.com

Memorial Day, observed on the last Monday in May, is a day of honoring and mourning the military personnel who have died in the performance of their military duties while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

The quiz below, from the Ashbrook Center at Ashland University, provides an opportunity for you to test your knowledge of our nation's armed forces ahead of Memorial Day, May 31.

1. Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress which powers?

- A.** The power to provide and maintain a navy
- B.** The power to raise and support armies
- C.** The power to declare war
- D.** All of the above

2. The oldest infantry unit has been active since 1784. What is it called?

- A.** Old Iron Sides
- B.** Yellow Jackets
- C.** Old Guard
- D.** Devil Dogs

3. Who is the current U.S. Secretary of Defense and in what branch of the military did he serve?

- A.** James Mattis and Marines
- B.** Lloyd Austin and Army
- C.** Chuck Hagel and Army
- D.** Donald Rumsfeld and Navy

4. Approximately how many military bases does the United States have



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Test your knowledge of our nation's armed forces ahead of Memorial Day, May 31, 2021.

in how many countries?

- A.** 500 bases in 50 countries
- B.** 600 bases in 60 countries
- C.** 700 bases in 70 countries
- D.** 800 bases in 80 countries

5. Which U.S. military base is considered to be the largest in the world?

- A.** Fort Hood in Texas
- B.** Eglin Air Force Base in Florida
- C.** Fort Bragg in North Carolina
- D.** Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington

6. Who is the only U.S. president to have served as an enlisted military man, but who did not become an

officer?

- A.** James Buchanan
- B.** Dwight D. Eisenhower
- C.** Franklin Pierce
- D.** Zachary Taylor

7. Fewer than 100 people have been bestowed the title "Honorary Marine," as has one famous cartoon character. Which character was it?

- A.** Mighty Mouse
- B.** Popeye
- C.** Bugs Bunny
- D.** Elmer Fudd

8. What year did President Harry Truman issue Executive Order 9981 barring discrimination in the

ANSWERS

1-D, 2-C, 3-B, 4-D, 5-C, 6-A, 7-C, 8-B, 9-A, 10-D

military "on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin" and beginning the process of de-segregation of the armed forces?

- A.** 1945
- B.** 1948
- C.** 1951
- D.** 1953

9. When did the first female cadets enter West Point?

- A.** 1976
- B.** 1982
- C.** 1987
- D.** 1991

10. Which of the following apply to World War II's 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team?

- A.** Primarily composed of second-generation American citizens of Japanese descent
- B.** Awarded Congressional Gold Medal in 2010
- C.** Unit motto was "Go for Broke"
- D.** All of the above

Story courtesy of InsideSources. Jennifer D. Keene is a member of the Ashbrook Center faculty and curator of Ashbrook's compilation "World War II: Core Documents"; she is also a professor of history and chair of the History Department at Chapman University.

MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

Memorial Day: See what's planned locally this year

By Dean Potter

For MediaNews Group

Editor's Note: Memorial Day events for many Michigan communities were not finalized by press time due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. All Memorial Day plans listed should be considered tentative as changes may occur as a result of the pandemic, so please make sure to check with community leaders for the most up-to-date event information. Events are planned for Monday, May 31, unless otherwise noted.

Memorial Day. Family barbecues. A three-day weekend. The unofficial start of summer. Many people are eagerly looking forward to Memorial Day if for no other reason but as an escape from the pandemic. However, some — especially younger generations — may not realize the real meaning behind Memorial Day. Memorial Day is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971. The number of fallen soldiers is staggering. To help grasp the numbers - Imagine a packed University of Michigan Stadium on game day. The stadium's seating capacity is 107,601 people. Now imagine the stadium packed with coffins- six times over. It is a sobering vision. The United States has lost more than 651,031 soldiers through 11 wars, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The State of Michigan is home to more than 650,000 veterans.

Unlike past years, where communities throughout

the region hosted large-scale Memorial Day parades and celebrations to honor the fallen, events will be modified (if not canceled) for a second year due to the pandemic. Many cities are hosting "virtual" parades, while others are hosting them in-person but taking safety precautions, like not allowing candy to be thrown.

Here's a look at some local events planned for this Memorial Day throughout Michigan:

OAKLAND COUNTY

Birmingham - Due to COVID-19, the City of Birmingham plans to host a virtual Memorial Day service at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 31, live on its Facebook page, facebook.com/BhamGov. No on-site audience will be allowed. The virtual patriotic program will include addresses of historical interest, Mayoral address, and wreath laying at the monuments in Shane Park. Civil War reenactors will assist in the service. This year's service will commemorate the Korean War. For more information visit bhamgov.org.

Beverly Hills - The 2021 Parade and Carnival have been canceled due to the pandemic, but a memorial reading will be held at 1 p.m. at Beverly Park, 18801 Beverly Rd. Residents may also view the Village of Beverly Hills Memorial Day Parade Marathon on local cable TV beginning at 9 a.m. on Monday. For more information visit villageofbeverlyhills.com

Clawson - Wreath laying and memorial reading event at the Gazebo at the library 416 N. Main street at 10 a.m. organized by American Legion Post 167. For more information visit cityofclawson.com.

Farmington/Farming-



PHOTO BY ROY J. AKERS — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Participants march in the 2019 Memorial Day Parade in Waterford.

ton Hills - The Farmington/Farmington Hills Memorial Day Parade will not take place in-person this year to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19. The Groves Walker American Legion Post 346 and the Exemplar Club are creating a Virtual Memorial Day event which will take place on Memorial Day at memorialdayparade.us, including footage from prior years. Community members are invited to send a message of thanks to our local veterans, first responders and front-line workers by recording a short video clip which will be included in the virtual parade. Both

photos and videos can be uploaded by going to memorialdayparade.us/virtual and clicking on the green "Add Photos" button.

Videos should:

- Begin by identifying yourself.
- Be no more than 15-20 seconds long.
- Be recorded in a quiet area to avoid background noises, in 'landscape mode' if using your phone.
- Be respectful to our military, first responders, front-line workers, their families, or other residents who are serving or have served.
- Be mindful of persons, objects or art visible or au-

dible in the background of the recording.

Hazel Park - The 2021 Memorial Day Parade will start at 10 a.m., leaving from City Hall and marching west on John R Rd. then turn south to Woodward Heights and ending at Green Acres Park. The Memorial Day festival is canceled this year. For more information visit hazelpark.org.

Holly - A parade is planned for 10 a.m. Monday in downtown Holly in front of the post office, 108 W. Maple St. It will travel down Maple to Park Street, ending at Lakeside Cemetery. There will be a memorial ceremony immediately following the parade. VFW post 5587 Chaplain Fred Kelly will be the master of ceremonies. For more information, contact VFW Post 5587 at 248-459-5719.

Lake Orion - Parade and 5k run/walk. This year's event will start/finish on Anderson Street adjacent to the Children's Park parking lot in downtown Lake Orion and will follow the Paint Creek Trail. Registration and packet pickup will be available from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, May 30, at Hanson's Running Shop in Lake Orion. Day of check-in will take place at 20 Front Street starting at 8 a.m. Each participant will receive an event dog tag at the finish. A Memorial Day ceremony will take place at noon at the Veteran's memorial, 312 S. Broadway St. Virtual option also available. For more information visit downtownlakeorion.org.

Madison Heights - Instead of a parade this year, the City of Madison Heights will hold a special Memorial Service and wreath laying ceremony at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 29, at the gazebo outside City Hall. Attendees will stay in their cars and

watch the memorial service with sound coming through the radio. The ceremony will also be broadcast live on the city's Memorial Day Parade Facebook page, facebook.com/MadisonParade. For more information visit madison-heights.org.

Milford - In lieu of the village's official Memorial Day Parade this year, a small memorial ceremony will take place at noon on Monday, at the Veterans Memorial in Central Park. For more information, contact the Milford American Legion Post, 248-684-9919 or visit their website at milfordlegion216.org.

Novi - A virtual memorial day service and wreath laying ceremony will be streamed live on the city's Facebook page at 9 a.m., facebook.com/cityofnovi.

Ortonville - The 2021 Village Memorial Day Parade starts at 9:30 a.m., beginning on Church Street and ending at the cemetery on Ortonville Road. For more information visit ortonvillevillage.com.

Oxford - Oxford's Memorial Day parade will start at 10 a.m. Monday at Oxford Centennial Park. The parade procession will travel north on Main Street then west on Burdick street before ending at Ridge Lawn cemetery with a memorial service immediately following the parade. The memorial ceremony will include laying a wreath, 21-gun salute and playing of taps. For more information, contact American Legion Post 108 Commander David Perry at 248-252-8228.

Pleasant Ridge - A brief memorial service will take place at 9 a.m. at Memorial Park, located off Woodward Avenue between Elm Park and Oakland Park Streets next to City Hall. For more information, visit cityofpleasantridge.org.

Rochester - The City of Rochester will host a Memorial Day celebration at 9 a.m. Monday at Mount Avon Cemetery, 400 6th St. The ceremony will include a wreath laying, lowering of the flag and a speech by Mayor Stuart Bikson. For more information, visit ci.rochester.mi.us.

Royal Oak - The Royal Oak Memorial Day Parade will begin at 9 a.m. Monday, starting at Lincoln and Main streets and traveling north to Third St. A memorial ceremony will immediately follow. At 9:15 a.m. the Tuskegee airmen will fly over the parade. One of the featured floats this year will be the "Rosy the Riveter" float, carrying 11 women in their 90's who worked for the defense industry during World War II. The parade's Grand Marshal will be 96-year-old Cliff Alivra, who fought in World War II and landed on Normandy. All attendees at this year's event are asked to wear masks. For more information, visit romi.gov/parade.

South Lyon - The South Lyon Memorial Day Parade, organized by the South Lyon VFW Post 1224, will begin at 9 a.m. outside Bartlett Elementary and make its way east on 10 Mile through downtown to Reynold Sweet Parkway. The parade ends in the South Lyon Cemetery with a brief ceremony commemorating the contributions of all veterans. For more information, visit southlyonmi.org.

Troy - A Memorial Day Ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. Monday in front of City Hall (Veterans Memorial Plaza). The event will feature memorial speeches, music and raising of the colors by the Troy Police Department Honor Guard, as well as the laying of a Memorial Wreath. The ceremony is open to the public and is expected to last approximately one hour. For more information, contact the Community Affairs Department at 248-524-1147 or

visit troymi.gov.

Walled Lake - The City of Walled Lake will be holding a brief, socially-distant service at 11 a.m. Monday, in lieu of their annual Memorial Day Parade. For more information, visit walledlake.us.

Waterford/Waterford Township - The Waterford Township Memorial Day Parade will be canceled this year due to the pandemic. Instead, the 2019 Memorial Day Parade will air at 10 a.m. May 31 on Channel 20 on Comcast and Channel 99 on Uverse, and will stream from the township website, waterfordmi.gov.

MACOMB COUNTY

Armada - The American Legion Post 93 will be hosting a Memorial Day parade at 10 a.m. Monday. There are no official village sponsored events planned. For more detailed information call 586-784-5919.

Clinton Township - A Memorial Day Mass is planned for 10 a.m. at Resurrection Cemetery, 18201 Clinton River Rd., followed by a veteran service and dedication at 11:30 a.m. at the American Veterans Memorial. For more information about Memorial Day events, visit clintontownship.com.

New Baltimore - New Baltimore's Memorial Day Parade is planned for 10 a.m. Monday, beginning at Burke Park and marching down Washington Street to City Hall, where a memorial ceremony will be held. The parade will feature the New Baltimore High School Marching Band, several floats and more. For more information about the event, call the parks and recreation department at 586-725-0291 or visit nbcreation.org.

New Haven - American Legion veterans will be hosting a Memorial Day Parade in New Haven at 10 a.m. Monday, kicking off at 58725 Haven Ridge St., and ending at New Haven Centennial Cemetery, 32499 Clark St. For more informa-



PHOTO BY MITCH HOTTS — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Flag-bearers march in a previous Sterling Heights Memorial Day Parade.

tion, visit newhavenmi.org.

Richmond - Richmond's Memorial Day Parade is planned for 10 a.m. Monday, beginning at Bailey Park. The parade route has been shortened this year — it will begin at Main Street at Washington Street and travel south to Water Street (like the Homecoming Parade), and end at pocket park near Maniaci's. A brief ceremony will be held at the Veterans Memorial on Main Street after the parade. The block of Main Street between Monroe and Water Streets will remain closed to allow the public to be socially distant, while still being able to watch the ceremony. For more information, visit cityofrichmond.net.

Romeo - Flags will be placed on veterans' graves on Monday, May 24, at Romeo Cemetery.

Roseville - The Roseville Memorial Day Parade is planned for 10 a.m. Monday, beginning at Common Road and Pinehurst Street. The parade will travel east on Common Road to the Fire Department headquarters and City Hall. Grand Marshall this year will be Screaming' Scott Randall of WRIF Radio. There will not be an in-person memorial ceremony following the parade this year. For more information, visit facebook.com/rsvlmiparade.

Shelby Township - A memorial ceremony is planned

for 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 30, at the Veterans Memorial at City Hall. For more information, contact Director of Community Relations Brad Bates at 586-731-5154.

St. Clair Shores - The 68th annual Saint Clair Shores Memorial Day Parade, "A Memorial Tribute," will take place at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 30, and run along Jefferson from 9 Mile Rd., and proceed north to 11 mile. The 2021 parade has more than 150 entries with the largest display of military vehicles and units anywhere. Grand Marshal this year is Korean War veteran Gene Perye, 91, who was set to serve as Grand Marshal for last year's parade before the pandemic struck. Other special guests this year include the USAF Honor Guard, the 338th Army Band, and a special appearance by actor Bruce Patrick, who played Eddie Munster and the Munster mobile. There will be action overhead with a Coast Guard flyover and Pegasus Sky Divers. On the ground, numerous state and local dignitaries, marching bands, military groups, civic and school organizations, local celebrities including Fox 2's Rich Luteran, Charlie Langton, and Amy Andrews will be in attendance. For more information, visit facebook.com/scsmemorialdayparade or

scsmi.net.

Sterling Heights - City leaders will pay tribute to local veterans with a brief ceremony scheduled for 9 a.m. Monday, May 31, in front of City Hall, followed by the unveiling of the newly renovated City Hall Memorial Garden. Following the ceremony, a multi-vehicle Memorial Day "cruise" in honor of local heroes along will take on an expanded route." For more information, visit sterlingheights.net.

Utica - American Legion Post 351 will place flags on graves at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 29, at St. Lawrence Cemetery, located at Auburn and Mound roads. A memorial ceremony will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday at Memorial Park, which will feature a 21-gun salute for veterans and a Navy Chaplain as a featured speaker. Attendees are invited to the American Legion Post 351 immediately following the ceremony for refreshments supplied by K'nicksies Pizza. For more information, visit cityofutica.org.

DEARBORN/ DOWNRIVER

Allen Park - The Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion held a ceremony on Saturday, May 22, at the Veterans Memorial at the old Veterans Hospital site at Southfield and Outer Drive.

Flat Rock - American Legion Post 337 will be planning an event for Memorial Day, with event details to be announced. Check flatrockmi.org for the most up-to-date information.

Dearborn - The annual Dearborn Memorial Day Parade has been canceled for the second year in a row due to COVID-19 concerns. A wreath laying ceremony will be held in lieu of a parade. For more information, visit cityofdearborn.org.

Lincoln Park - There will be a memorial ceremony put on by the VFW and American Legion at noon on Sunday, May 23, at the band-

shell of the Kennedy Memorial Building, 3240 Ferris. The city's annual John Dingell Memorial Day Parade was canceled for this year. The Exchange Club of Lincoln Park will also have a Field of Honor made up of 200 U.S. Flags in Place May 16 through Memorial Day with closing ceremony planned for 11 a.m. May 30. For more information, visit lpmddparade.webs.com.

River Rouge - Mayor Michael Bowdler and other dignitaries will have a flag raising ceremony at noon on Saturday, May 29, at Memorial Park. Participants will then walk to the Veterans cemetery on Jefferson for a wreath laying ceremony. For more information, visit cityofriverrouge.com.

Southgate - A memorial event is planned for 6 p.m. Thursday, May 27, at the Veteran's Memorial in front of Veteran's Memorial Library, 14680 Dix-Toledo Rd, next to City Hall. For more information about the event, contact Jim Austin at 734-752-0153.

Trenton - There will be a wreath laying ceremony with a few speakers at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 29, at Veteran's Memorial Library, 2790 Westfield, in Trenton. For more information, visit trentonmi.org.

MID-MICHIGAN

Harrison - The American Legion Harrison Post will be planning an event from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday, May 31. Details are TBD. For more information, contact veterans' affairs director Carl Howser at 989-539-3273 or Dale Tritten at 989-424-9300.

Mt. Pleasant - While there is no official parade planned for this year, the Mt. Pleasant VFW Post 3033 and the American Legion Post 110 will be marching to several different cemeteries throughout the area to honor fallen soldiers. For more information, call American Legion Post 110 at 989-772-9709.

LAWN & GARDEN

Are you growing the right type of grass?

Choosing the right type of grass optimizes the chances that your lawn will be healthy, beautiful and easy to maintain. However, experts say that there are many factors to consider.

“You may have your heart set on a specific type of grass because of where you grew up or because the Joneses down the street have a beautiful lawn and they grow XYZ grass. But what’s best for your lawn depends on where you live now and your growing conditions,” says landscape designer Doug Scott of Redeem Your Ground in Atlanta, Ga.

A free video series from Exmark, a leading manufacturer of lawn care equipment, can help you master your lawn. In a recent Exmark Original video, “Done In A Weekend, Grass 101,” Scott discusses the various benefits, maintenance needs and other considerations of each grass type. Here he shares some top factors to keep in mind:

- **Climate:** Grasses are typically divided into two temperature categories: warm-season and cool-season. Warm-season grasses grow best in hot, southern climates reaching 80 to 95 degrees, and go dormant when temperatures consistently drop below 65 degrees. Species like Zoysia, St. Augustine, Bahia and Centipede all grow best in hot, humid regions, whereas Bermuda grass grows best in hot, arid areas. On the other side of things are cool-season grasses, which grow best in northern regions where temperatures fall between 60-70 degrees. Species include tall and fine Fescue, Kentucky

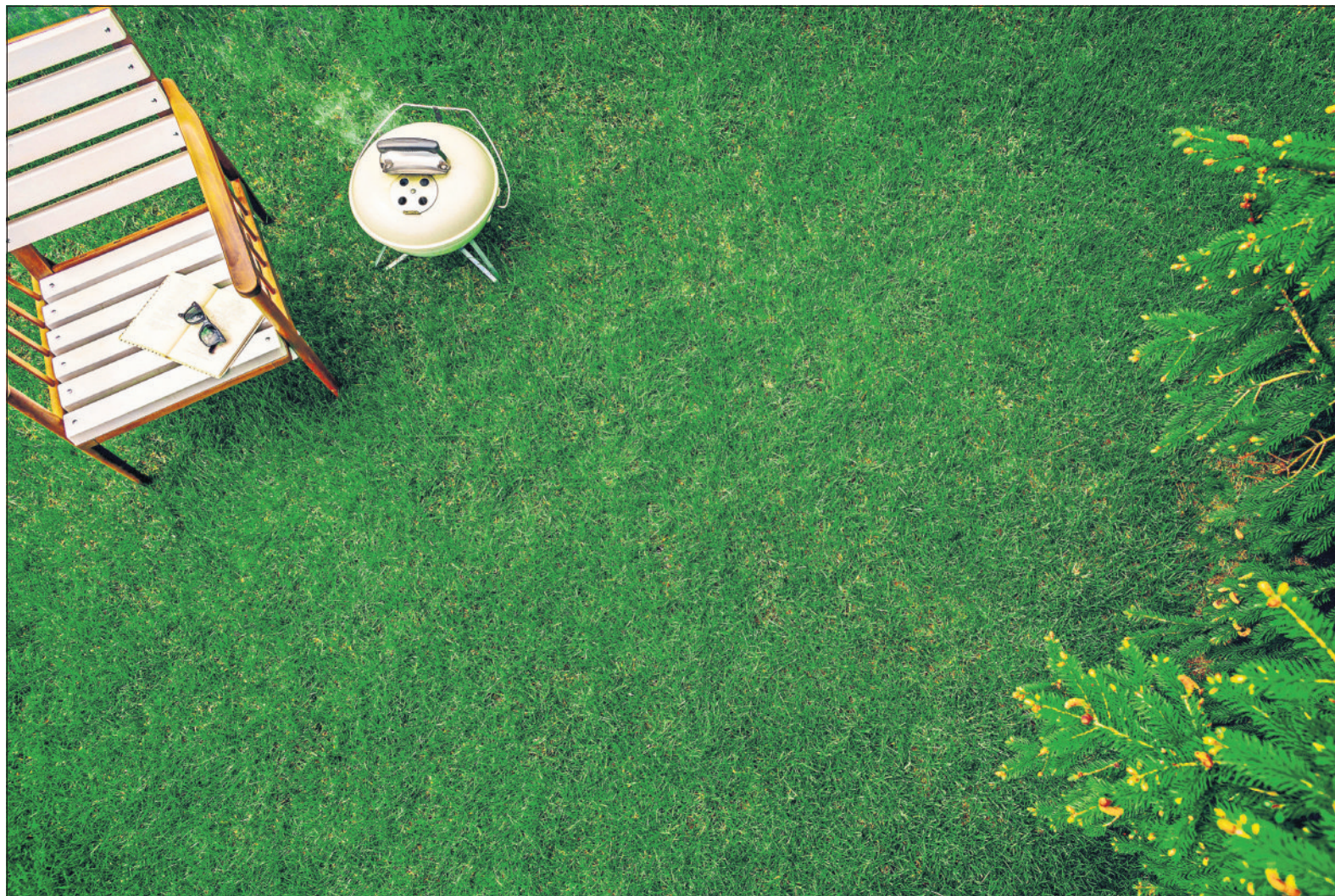


PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

By understanding your property’s growing conditions and a bit about grass types, you’ll be well-positioned to select the best grass for your needs and lifestyle.

Bluegrass and annual and perennial Ryegrass.

Living in the middle, in what’s known as the “Transitional Zone” can be both a blessing and a curse. On the positive side, you may have more grass choices, but on the downside, cool-season grasses may look worn-out by late summer, and warm-season grasses will be dormant longer.

- **Sun and Shade:** While there are exceptions, warm-season grasses

generally grow best in full sun areas getting 8 or more hours of direct sunlight daily, and cool-season grasses grow best in moderate or medium shade areas getting between 4 to 6 hours of direct sunlight daily. You may notice that no one talks about “full shade” — areas getting less than 4 hours of sunlight daily — when discussing grass. That’s because there’s no grass that thrives in these conditions

- **Water:** Different types of grass need different amounts of water to thrive. Warm-season grasses tend to be more drought-tolerant and require less water.

- **Use:** Heavy-turf grass like Zoysia or Bermuda stand up to activity best, whereas cool-season grasses typically don’t do well in high-traffic areas where children play or dogs run.

- **Maintenance:** What’s required to maintain a

healthy lawn also deserves consideration. In general, cool-season grasses cost less to install but more to maintain. Because they don’t form that dense carpet-like structure that heat-loving grasses do, cool-season grasses need to be watered and tended more.

For more tips, visit [Exmark.com/Backyard](https://www.exmark.com/backyard). Exmark’s Backyard Life is a multimedia destination focused on helping homeowners make the most

of their backyard. While visiting the site, you can also access other Exmark Original Series, including “Done-In-A-Weekend Projects,” “Prime Cuts” and “Dream Yards” videos.

By understanding your property’s growing conditions and a bit about grass types, you’ll be well-positioned to select the best grass for your needs and lifestyle.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Different types of grass need different amounts of water to thrive.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Grasses are typically divided into two temperature categories: warm-season and cool-season.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STATEPOINT MEDIA

What's best for your lawn depends on where you live now and your growing conditions, says landscape designer Doug Scott.

SUMMER SAFETY

Tips for a safer, more enjoyable summer at the pool

As summer approaches, pools are great for play, exercise and therapy. However, it is critical that while enjoying ourselves, we take appropriate safety precautions.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 275 children nationwide under the age of 5 drown in swimming pools annually, and more than 4,100 children

receive medical treatment for pool-related accidents, the majority of which occur in backyard pools. Luckily, building codes and standards can help.

“Building codes are life

savers and as the leading building codes and standards developer, we are accounting for every facet of the home, which includes specific provisions to make pools and spas safer,” says

Dominic Sims, CEO of the International Code Council.

Emphasizing the importance of water safety, the Code Council has dedicated a week (May 17-23) during its annual Building Safety

Month to the topic. To ensure individuals are having safe pool fun, the Code Council shares the following tips:

- Install fences and protective gates: To ensure the



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

It is critical that homeowners with swimming pools in their backyards take necessary safety precautions to ensure a safe and fun summer for family and friends.



According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 275 children nationwide under the age of 5 drown in swimming pools annually, and more than 4,100 children receive medical treatment for pool-related accidents, the majority of which occur in backyard pools.

pool area is inaccessible to unauthorized swimmers and children when there is no supervisor, install a fence at least 4-feet high around pool and spa areas with a self-closing, self-latching gate or door. Move all chairs, tables, large toys or other objects away from the perimeter that would allow a child to climb up to reach the gate latch or enable someone to climb over the fence.

- **Keep safety devices nearby:** Always keep basic lifesaving equipment handy (pole, rope and personal flotation devices) and know how to use them. These aids should be kept on both sides of the pool and should remain stationary – not be misplaced through play activities.

- **Install alarms:** Install alarms on all doors and windows to detect unauthorized access from the home into the pool area. You can also install a pool alarm to detect accidental or unauthorized entrance into the water. While the alarm provides an immediate warning, it is not a substitute for the barrier fences, door and window alarms or safety covers.

- **Remember safety covers:** Install an approved safety cover on any pool. For the safety of all individuals, do not allow anyone to stand or play on it.

- **Be code-compliant with drain covers and grates:** To help identify compliance with current standards, all pool and hot tub drains must have a cover or grate marked with the appropriate product marking, including the service life in years

and an information label that is provided to the pool owner. Not having a compliant cover could result in some part of a swimmer's body being entrapped in the drain – a dangerous situation that could result in injury or drowning. If a cover is broken, missing or noncompliant, the pool should be closed immediately, and a replacement should be performed by pool professionals.

- **Ensure an existing pool has safe suction outlets:** Pools and spas with a single drain – other than an unblockable outlet – must have a certified blockable suction outlet and one of the following: a safety vacuum release system; a suction-limiting vent system; a gravity drainage system; or other safety features that comply with industry standards.

- **Secure the proper permits for a pool installation:** If you're installing a pool, it will be important to contact your local building department first to determine what permits are needed and what requirements you must follow.

"With the weather warming and families spending more time at home, a pool offers hours of fun for everyone," says Sims. "In addition to adult supervision, safety code compliance helps ensure a safer, more enjoyable pool experience."

For more building safety resources, visit iccsafe.org.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media



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Building codes and standards can help prevent tragic drowning accident in backyard swimming pools.



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