

Compliments of Stacey Shanner

Good to Be

issue 01

HOME

DID YOU KNOW:

The magazine is typically displayed in the home for 3–4 weeks per issue. Half of recipients rank it as the most valuable branded product they receive from businesses.

Value-Added

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

*These upgrades are guaranteed
to boost your home's value*

PAGE 26



Stacey Shanner
Realtor®
Direct: (866) 458-4226



The Shanners
1100 First Avenue
Suite 200
King Of Prussia, PA 19406

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let the light in! | 44

ISSUE 1
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678

678

Front of Tear Out Card 1

raspberry-peach
ICEBOX CAKE

Peach Filling:

16 oz. cream cheese, softened

1 c. frozen peaches, thawed and pureed

½ c. granulated sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

12 oz. white chocolate chips, melted

Raspberry Filling:

16 oz. cream cheese, softened

1 c. frozen raspberries, thawed and pureed

½ c. granulated sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

12 oz. white chocolate chips, melted

(continued on other side)



Stacey Shanner
Realtor®

Direct: (866) 458-4226
Office: (610) 878-5000
E-mail: info@remindermedia.com
www.remindermedia.com


The Shanners
1100 First Avenue
Suite 200
King Of Prussia, PA 19406



57 percent of readers save these tear out cards to reference recipes and other helpful tips and pass along your contact info to referrals.



Back of Tear Out Card 1



SERVES 6-8

(ingredients continued)

2 c. whipped topping, with ½ cup reserved for garnish

1 box graham crackers

Garnishes:

Fresh peaches

Fresh raspberries

Mint sprigs

1. Place the peach filling ingredients in an electric mixer, fitted with a paddle attachment, and blend until smooth.
2. Scrape mixture into a large bowl with ½ cup of the whipped topping. Fold together until combined, and set aside. Clean out the mixing bowl, and repeat steps with the raspberry filling ingredients. Place each mixture into separate piping bags.
3. Line a loaf pan with plastic wrap, with extra hanging over the pan. Dollop ½ cup of whipped topping on the bottom, and spread evenly. Top with graham crackers, and gently press down. Pipe a layer of peach cream, and arrange a few of the fresh peaches on top. Pipe another layer of peach cream, and top with graham crackers, gently pressing down. Repeat this process for raspberry filling and fresh raspberries, and continue layering until the peach and raspberry creams are gone.
4. Top the final layer with graham crackers, and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 24 hours. When ready to serve, uncover the plastic wrap from the top of the loaf pan and invert onto a plate. Remove the pan and plastic wrap. Spread remaining whipped topping onto the outside of the cake.
5. Slice when ready to serve, and garnish with peach slices, raspberries, and a sprig of mint.



Dear Bill and Judy,

Is there anything better than the joy summer brings? With its long days, warm nights, and extra time with loved ones, summer is, perhaps, the most carefree time of year. For many, the home is at the center of all that happiness. This first issue of Good to Be Home celebrates what makes it the best place to be this time of year.

Summer is all about spending more time on what matters most to you and less time on the mundane, like cleaning and organizing. The housekeeping tips in this issue are strategically quick and simple, helping you maintain spick-and-span living spaces with ease.

If you are looking to make upgrades to your space, you're probably thinking about the outside first. It's easy to make your backyard the place to be: summer gardening solutions, outdoor improvements to boost your home's value, and alternative ideas for making use of your lawn can all help you get there.

And the backyard doesn't have to be reserved exclusively for relaxation or recreation; it can also serve as a second kitchen and dining area. The recipes in this issue are refreshing, colorful, and oh-so-summery.

This time of year is full of exciting possibilities, but staying safe outdoors and healthy is equally important. Make sure you and your loved ones, including your pets, are protected by following the enclosed summer safety tips.

May you find happiness in everything summer brings this year. Please enjoy all that this issue has to offer!

Stacey Shanner



Stacey Shanner
Realtor®

Direct: (866) 458-4226

Office: (610) 878-5000

E-mail: info@remindermedia.com

www.remindermedia.com

Shanner Realty

1100 First Avenue

Suite 200

King of Prussia, PA 19406

Add a personal letter to the front inside cover that speaks to your connections. This personalization leads 77 percent of recipients to better appreciate the sender.



When it comes to the prospect of deep cleaning the home, most people don't jump up and down with excitement. And with so much going on in your everyday life, finding the time to get around to cleaning can seem overwhelming. Conquer your cleaning list in no time with these quick and easy projects that can be completed in just thirty minutes or less!

DO A REFRIGERATOR OVERHAUL

Start by tossing any expired items or leftover takeout. Using an all-purpose cleaner, clean the outside of the refrigerator, and then wipe down the inside of the refrigerator, including the shelves, with warm, soapy water. You'll want to remove any drawers and wash them in soapy water as well. Be sure to rinse and dry all surfaces of the fridge well.

SANITIZE HIGH-TOUCH AREAS

Using a disinfectant, go over some of the most frequently touched items in your home, such as light switches, doorknobs, door handles, and handrails. Be sure to spray the cleaner on a paper towel, as too much cleaner in these areas (if not wiped off thoroughly) can be dangerous. You can also use a cotton swab for small, detailed spots.

DUST THE FLOOR LEVEL

Put an old sock or a dryer sheet over your hand, and run it along baseboards to immediately remove any dust or grime. You can also use a surface-safe all-purpose cleaner to scrub away any stubborn residue. Once these areas are clean, dust once a week to prevent buildup.

CLEAN THE GLASS

Using glass cleaner or a simple DIY solution of vinegar and water, wipe down the inside of all the windows in one floor of your home. Be sure to dry them carefully using old newspaper, paper towels, or rags (the greenest choice) to avoid streaks. If you still have time, move on to a different level in your home.

MOP THE KITCHEN AND BATHROOM FLOORS

Kitchens and bathrooms tend to be the most germey rooms in the house. Grab a bucket, a mop, and your favorite cleaner, and sanitize your floors in no time. Focus on stuck-on materials first, starting with one corner and working your way across the room.

Keeping your home clean is important to overall maintenance, but it shouldn't be a source of stress. Each of these tasks is easy and quick and will make an immediate difference in your home.

Good to BeHOME

PUBLISHER

Chief Executive Officer Steven Acree
publisher@remindermedia.com

EXECUTIVE

President Luke Acree
Chief Marketing Officer Joshua Stike
Chief Operating Officer Michael Graziola

MARKETING

Director of Marketing Dan Acree
Director of Creative Services Kristin Sweeney
Brand Content Manager Jessica Fitzpatrick
marketing@remindermedia.com

EDITORIAL

Senior Editor Matthew Brady
Editor Alexa Bricker
Content Writer Rachel Stevens
Layout Designer Jordan Hunsberger
editorial@remindermedia.com

SALES AND CLIENT SUCCESS

Vice President Ethan Acree
Vice President of Operations Nicholas Bianco
Vice President of Sales Michael Campanile
hello@remindermedia.com

OPERATIONS

Vice President of IT Thomas Setliff
Director of Projects Kelsie Schmall
Director of Business Intelligence Daniel Gallaway
Director of Manufacturing Shannon Mosser
Vice President of Finance Shana Lebofsky
Director of HR John Keogh
hr@remindermedia.com



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04

Each issue is filled with feel-good content that engages your audience and makes 80 percent of recipients more likely to do business with you.



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today's best LAWN ALTERNATIVES

written by:
CHRISTY MURDOCK EDGAR

Many homeowners today, including younger, first-time homebuyers, environmentalists, and those looking for a simpler lifestyle, are embracing alternatives to traditional lawns.

The pandemic has brought about changes in the priorities that many homeowners hold and allowed them to explore new hobbies like cooking and gardening. However, if you're not quite ready to forego the traditional lawn, start with your backyard and make it a unique, personal reflection of your aesthetic. Here are just a few of the possibilities.



biodiverse lawns

Biodiverse landscaping involves the reintroduction of native flora to the home garden, including the replacement of trees and ground coverings with native species. This allows native insects, birds, and wildlife to return to your property and promotes healthier ecosystems. In addition, native plantings are better able to withstand local weather conditions, meaning less watering and cultivation in order to achieve a beautiful outcome.

natural pools

Forget artificial, too-blue pools. Natural pools offer both a more organic aesthetic and more environmentally friendly functionality. Built to resemble natural creeks and ponds, a natural pool is filtered organically with native plant species and gravel in a process similar to that which occurs in nature. The natural pool, along with its regeneration zone, creates its own environment that helps to nourish local plant and animal populations.



START WITH YOUR BACKYARD AND MAKE IT A UNIQUE, PERSONAL REFLECTION *of your aesthetic.* ■ ■ ■

low-maintenance lawns

If you're interested in an easy-care alternative to the traditional lawn without creating extensive new infrastructure, there are a variety of low-maintenance options available. Remember to look for those that are native to your area in order to increase their bioavailability and make them easier to care for and cultivate.

Ornamental grasses

Many ornamental grasses do not require cutting. Some can grow as high as a few feet, while others may stay lower to the ground. Ornamental grasses come in a variety of colors and styles and are often valued for their ability to enrich the soil and provide protection from sedimentary runoff.

Mosses

If you have a shady backyard, moss may be the answer you've been looking for. Low to the ground and soft, so you can still walk over it, moss spreads quickly and establishes itself as a hearty choice for your low-maintenance yard. Like ornamental grasses, moss comes in a variety of styles so you can create your own one-of-a-kind design plan.

Ground cover

There are a wide variety of perennial plants that creep and spread throughout your yard to make a beautiful ornamental garden. Many of these are flowering plants that bloom for much of the year and require little or no maintenance.

Succulent gardens

If you have soil with good drainage or live in an area with predominantly sandy soil, a succulent garden may be right for you. There are a variety of styles and colors to choose from, and their varying textures will create an attractive natural patchwork in your yard.

Wildflower meadows

If you have a lot of lawn to fill, you might want to turn part of it over to a wildflower meadow. You have many options for wildflower seed mixes and roll-out mats, which will make establishing your wildflower garden easier. Once established, wildflowers will come back year after year and tolerate even the harshest conditions.

Hardscapes

If you want to cut down on the amount of lawn you need to maintain, consider expanding your existing

hardscapes. Paths and terraces can be interspersed with low-maintenance native plants to offer you the best of both worlds—biodiversity and areas for seating, grilling, dining, and entertaining.

garden options

Whether you were born with a green thumb or are just starting to get interested in gardening, filling part of your lawn with a useful and beautiful garden allows you to both cut down on lawn maintenance and grow foods and flowers that enhance your life in practical ways.

Flower beds

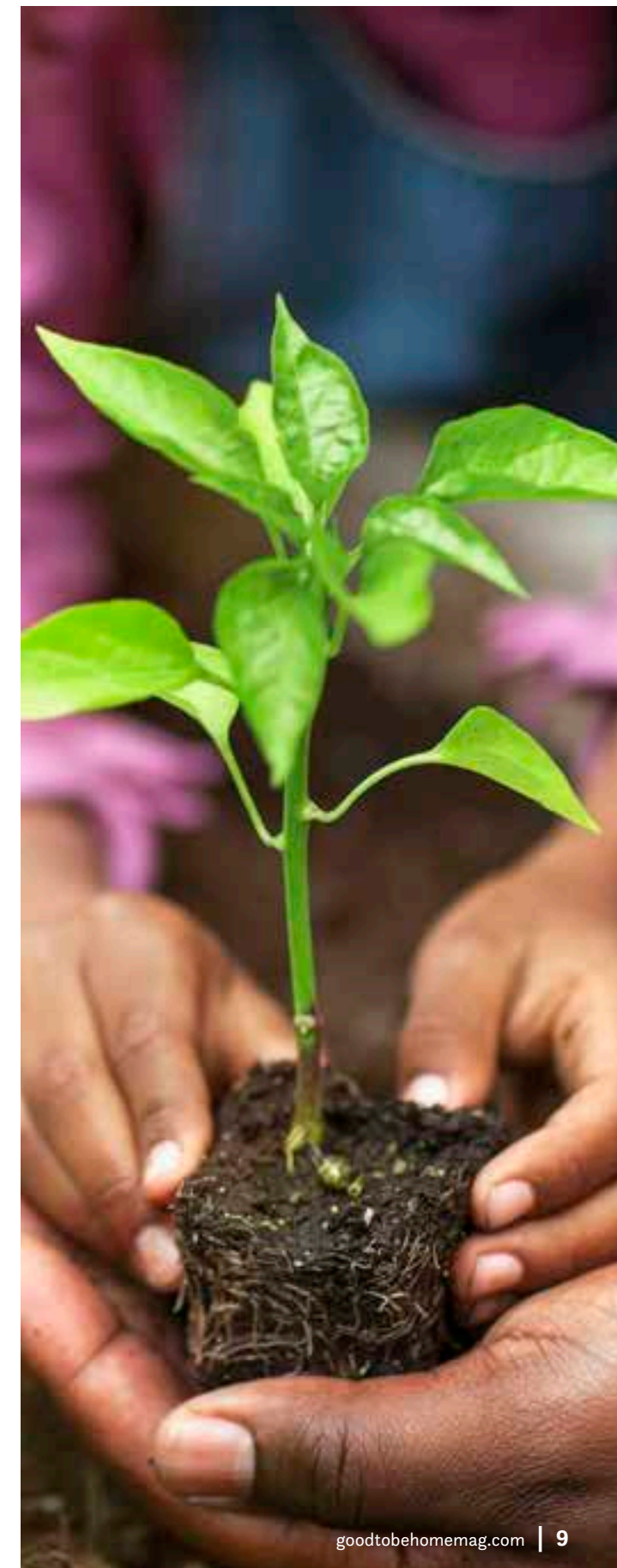
Traditional ornamental flower beds, shrubbery, and other garden types make great options for adding beauty to your yard while cutting down on the amount of lawn you need to maintain. Choose native species for easy care and environmental benefits. Consider playing around with traditional elements like follies and labyrinths for even more fun.

Herb gardens

If you love cooking, then you'll love having your own herb garden in your backyard. Cultivate a variety of herbs to enhance your culinary efforts and make your outdoor spaces smell delightful. Many herbs can be grown throughout the year and many are perennial—plant them once, and enjoy them for years to come.

Vegetable gardens

If you really want to create game-changing results for your dinner table, invest the time and effort to create a large kitchen garden. Experiment with a variety of fruits and vegetables, especially those that are native to your region. Consider both an early harvest and a late one featuring root vegetables that can grow even in a cooler climate.





KEEP YOUR *electric bill* IN CHECK THIS SUMMER

Summer is known for its abundance of sunshine. However, as the temperature rises during these months, your electric bill often does, too. Fortunately, there are multiple ways to offset the high costs that accompany the much-needed cool air. Use these tricks to thoroughly enjoy the warm weather—without having to fret about your bills.

LET YOUR AC BREATHE

Clogged, dirty air-conditioning filters will disrupt air flow and reduce the unit's efficiency. Make sure to replace or clean filters every month or two during peak season to keep your home cool while using less energy.

CHANGE YOUR LIGHT BULBS

Unlike traditional light bulbs, LED lights emit very little heat, making them an energy-efficient choice to help keep your home cool. In addition, they can last much longer than traditional light bulbs.

MAKE ROOM FOR YOUR VENTS

Furniture can easily hide vents. Sure, your love seat and kitchen table may look good just where they are, but they could be blocking airflow if you have central air. Make sure you're aware of your air-conditioning vent locations, and move pieces if necessary.



KEEP TEMPERATURES MODERATE

If you or a loved one is the type to keep the thermostat at 70, you may be losing money unnecessarily every day. The Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 degrees while you're at home. While you're away, set your thermostat a few degrees higher than normal as well, which can help you save even more on your monthly electric bill. This rule can be applied for long trips and even while you're away for the day—every degree can save you cash.

WORK WITH MOTHER NATURE

There's no denying that Mother Nature is a strong force—so be sure to obey her. When the sun is up and

blazing, keep the blinds shut. Although it might be darker than usual, it'll help keep your space cool.

CHANGE YOUR COOKING METHODS

A hot meal from the oven is great, but during the summer? Not so much. Because the oven can add more heat to your kitchen and beyond, consider grilling outside more frequently during the summer.



nine eco-friendly upgrades that *PAY FOR THEMSELVES*

written by:
CHRISTY MURDOCK EDGAR

Reducing your home’s carbon footprint has a host of benefits, from savings on the operation of your home’s systems to reducing their impact on the environment. However, many environmentally responsible choices are expensive, and it can feel overwhelming to try to retrofit your existing home with eco-friendly changes.

The good news is that there are some changes you can make that are not only good for the planet but also for your wallet—both upon installation and every month on your utility bill. Below are some of the most cost-effective changes, including many that you can do yourself, in order to help you create a smarter, greener home.

1. Smart Home Upgrades

There are a variety of smart home upgrades to consider that can more than pay for themselves over time. A smart thermostat allows you to exercise greater control over your home’s climate control, either through programming temperature adjustments ahead of time or through changing the thermostat settings remotely. In addition, smart plugs and power strips allow you to cut passive power consumption from appliances that are plugged in even when not in use, including coffee pots, video game systems, and televisions.



2. On-Demand Water Heater

One of the most expensive appliances to run in your home is the water heater. Because a traditional water heater must keep a tank of water hot at all times, it runs 24/7, whether you're there or not. By contrast, a tankless, on-demand water heater offers you unlimited hot water without the need for constant energy expenditure. Plus, tankless water heaters often last up to twice as long as traditional water heaters before they need to be replaced.

3. Mature Landscaping

Among the biggest returns on investment (ROI) when it comes to home improvement is mature landscaping. According to the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), exterior home improvements, including lawn care, flower and planting beds, and new trees, offer 100 percent ROI. In addition, when you use environmentally friendly cultivation methods and choose plants that are native to your region, you improve both the look and health of your property. If you're thinking about selling your home, a landscaping makeover is one of the most cost-effective improvements you can make.

4. Pest-Control Planting

If you're tired of paying for monthly or quarterly pest control, consider the power of natural solutions to curb your home's pest problem. Citronella grass or flowers like marigolds, mums, or petunias can all help repel a variety of bugs and rodents. In addition, basil, rosemary, lavender, and other herbs provide two benefits for the price of one—an herb garden for tastier cooking and natural pest control.



5. Plumbing Upgrades

A few simple plumbing upgrades can make a big difference in your water use and in your utility bill. Aerators for sink faucets, a low-flow showerhead, and a tank bag to convert a standard toilet into a low-flow toilet are all easy and inexpensive DIY ways to make your money go further and to be kinder to the environment. And because you can upgrade all of your home's plumbing fixtures in just a few minutes and do the work yourself, you save even more money.

6. Eco-Friendly Insulation

Traditional fiberglass insulation can save you energy and money, but its manufacturing and air-quality impacts can be detrimental to your eco-friendly efforts. Cellulose insulation, made from 80–85 percent recycled newsprint, is an environmentally responsible option that can lower your heating and cooling costs. Denim, sheep's wool, and aerogel are other insulation alternatives that

can keep your home toasty for less money and less environmental impact.

7. Window And Door Trim Sealing

Use a feather or ribbon to check for drafts, and add caulk where necessary around interior window or door trim and foam filler around exterior trim. This simple fix will help you to keep the cold air outside in the winter and inside in the summer. It's also a great money-saver since the material is affordable and you can do the work yourself in just a few minutes.

8. Solar Tube Lighting

While you may be familiar with skylights, you may be less familiar with solar tube lighting. Unlike skylights, which bring natural light into your home in a limited way, solar tube lighting can bring sunlight from one opening into multiple rooms of

your home. That saves money on your power bills by providing daytime overhead lighting at no cost and without bringing additional heat inside. While you won't get the sky view provided by a beautiful set of skylights, you will get the money-saving benefits along with a lower installation cost.

9. Radiant Floor Heating

Radiant floor heating offers a host of benefits over traditional heating methods, from lower cost to operate to safer heating to more long-term reliability. Radiant floor heating systems require virtually no maintenance and come with thirty-year warranties—longer than even the most generous HVAC system warranties. In addition, you never have to worry about a burn from a radiator or lower air quality from a dirty air filter, so this heating option is healthier and more energy-efficient.

THERE ARE SOME CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE THAT ARE NOT ONLY GOOD FOR THE PLANET BUT ALSO FOR YOUR WALLET.



INNOVATIVE WAYS TO ADD *instant* CURB APPEAL



There is truth to the saying “You never get a second chance to make a first impression”—and the same philosophy applies to your home. Whether you are in the market to sell your house or are just looking for a refresh, taking some time to master your home’s curb appeal can go a long way.

In fact, most real estate experts agree that some simple landscaping and cleaning can

have a big impact on the perceived value of your home. And, even if you’re not selling, everyone loves when their house looks great!

These curb appeal tips—perfect for a Saturday afternoon DIY—are sure to increase the charm of your home.

1. REFRESH THE FRONT DOOR

If you haven’t paid much attention to your door lately, consider adding a fresh coat of paint. And don’t be afraid of a bright pop of color—just remember that the color should complement the overall feel and color scheme of your home’s existing exterior.

2. GO GREEN

Adding plants and flowers can be a great, easy way to add pops of color to the exterior of your home. Consider a variety of flowers in coordinating colors, or pick up ready-made arrangements for a quick fix. Utilizing window boxes is another easy way to add some color and greenery to the front of your home.

3. UPDATE HARDWARE

Modern hardware—whether on your front door, garage, or mailbox—can help bring your home into the twenty-first century. Take a trip to the local hardware store, and look for pieces that are clean and modern, such as copper or matte black. Just make sure all of the finishes match.

4. UPGRADE HOUSE NUMBERS

Choose house numbers with a contemporary look in a finish that matches your other exterior hardware, such as your door handle and light fixtures. Also keep size in mind; the numbers should be clearly visible from the street but shouldn’t overwhelm other elements of your exterior.



5. OUT WITH THE OLD

Replacing or painting your old, worn-out mailbox can make a tremendous difference to your home’s curb appeal. Also, pay close attention to the base, and consider adding some flowers for a finishing touch.

6. DEEP CLEAN

Don’t underestimate the importance of pressure-washing your home’s siding, pathways, and deck. Windows and gutters should also be well maintained. These simple acts of maintenance will not only keep your home cleaner but also drastically improve its appearance.

7. CREATE SYMMETRY

Symmetry is visually appealing to the eyes as well as one of the easiest and fastest ways to add instant curb appeal to your home. Take a step back, and make sure any adornments on the front of your home (e.g., sconces and planters) are symmetrically balanced.



THE PERFECT VACATION? *a staycation.*



FAMILY VACATIONS DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO BE TRIPS TO FARAWAY LANDS OR EPIC ROAD TRIPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. A STAYCATION IS A GREAT WAY TO EXPLORE YOUR OWN CITY WHILE SPENDING TIME WITH THE ONES YOU LOVE. IF A PLANE RIDE OR ROAD TRIP ISN'T IN THE CARDS AGAIN THIS YEAR, DON'T FRET. A STAYCATION IS THE PERFECT ALTERNATIVE.

LET'S PLAY!

If you're not sure how to get everyone involved in the staycation action, the ideas below are a great place to start. They're guaranteed fun for all ages—and you won't have to spend hours in the car to get there.

Have a board game tournament

Playing board games is one of the best ways to spend time together as a family, and when it's turned into an epic competition, it can be even more fun. (Bonus: this is also the perfect rainy-day activity.) Break out a stack of your family's favorite games, and get playing. If you want to raise the stakes, designate prizes for the winner of each game and a grand prize for the person who wins the most games overall.

Go camping in your backyard

There's no need to trek into the wilderness for a camping excursion when you can make your very own campsite in your backyard! All you need is a tent, flashlights, and a campfire to enjoy this fun family activity together. If you don't already have a firepit, consider making or purchasing one so that you can enjoy s'mores under the stars—and be sure to check out the sidebar for fun s'mores flavor options!

Visit a local tourist attraction

If state and local ordinances allow, consider paying a visit to a nearby tourist attraction, such as a historic house, theater, or park, that you haven't visited before. Small towns are filled with fun restaurants, shops, and historical





sites that we often take for granted because we drive or walk past them every day. Try stepping inside for a new perspective!

Go paddleboarding/kayaking

Getting out on the water via paddleboarding or kayaking is a fun summer activity that the whole family can participate in, and it is a little more relaxing than other adventurous water sports. Do a quick internet search for the closest lake or river near you, and if you don't own your own equipment, look around for companies to rent them from.

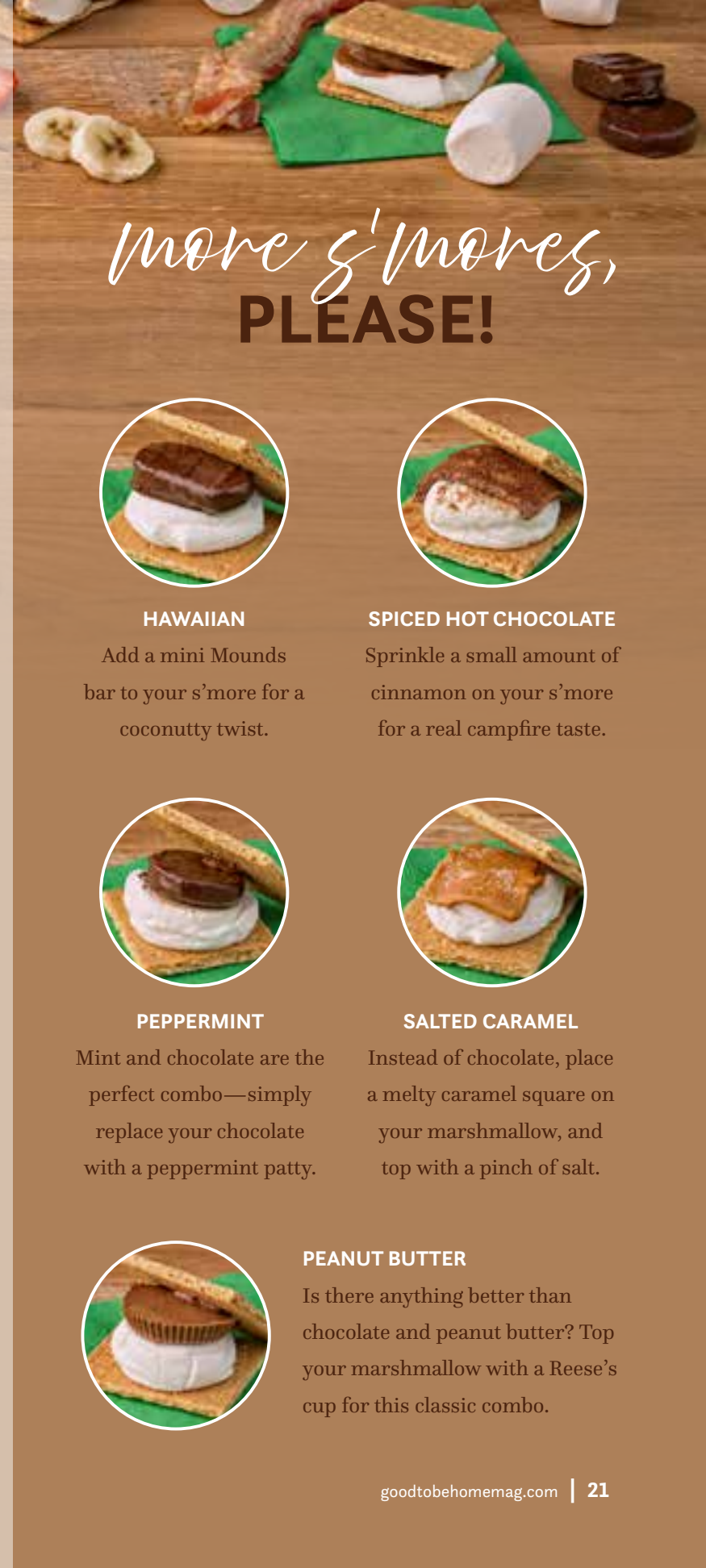
Get outside

Some of the best childhood summer memories are the ones of days and nights spent playing in the neighborhood. Making

new memories doesn't take much: just a few people and your imagination. Take advantage of the beautiful weather to play a pickup game of softball or football, go on a hike, or simply relax in the sun. (Just be sure to protect your skin.) When summer ends, you'll be able to say you made the most of those long, warm days.

Visit a nearby national park

If you live even remotely close to a national park, consider paying a visit to take in all of the natural beauty this country has to offer. The National Park Service website has a detailed list of all the parks throughout the country, plus an in-depth look at some of the activities and attractions each park has to offer. Browse the site to see the possibilities near you, and plan a day or weekend trip.



more s'mores, **PLEASE!**



HAWAIIAN

Add a mini Mounds bar to your s'more for a coconutty twist.



SPICED HOT CHOCOLATE

Sprinkle a small amount of cinnamon on your s'more for a real campfire taste.



PEPPERMINT

Mint and chocolate are the perfect combo—simply replace your chocolate with a peppermint patty.



SALTED CARAMEL

Instead of chocolate, place a melty caramel square on your marshmallow, and top with a pinch of salt.



PEANUT BUTTER

Is there anything better than chocolate and peanut butter? Top your marshmallow with a Reese's cup for this classic combo.

fruit-filled *frosé*

recipes by: PATTERSON WATKINS

If you're looking for a drink that's fruity, refreshing, and perfect for summer, there's nothing better than frosé. Whether you're sipping it by the pool or serving at a picnic, you can't go wrong with this popular adult beverage.

watermelon-basil frosé | serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup lime juice
- 2½ cups watermelon, chopped
- 3 ounces triple sec
- 1 bottle rosé
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped

Garnishes:

- Basil sprigs
- Watermelon slices

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a small saucepot over medium-high heat, gently simmer sugar and lime juice until sugar has dissolved, creating a simple syrup. Let cool.
2. In a food processor, combine simple syrup, watermelon, and triple sec. Blend until pureed, and pour the mixture into a large bowl.
3. Whisk in rosé and fresh basil, and pour into a large container. Cover, and freeze until slushy.
4. Serve with basil sprigs and watermelon slices.

TIP: *These recipes will take about 12–24 hours to get slushy, depending on your freezer's settings.*

strawberry-ginger frosé | serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup lime juice
- 2½ cups strawberries, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- 1 bottle rosé

Garnishes:

- Mint sprigs
- Candied ginger
- Fresh strawberries, sliced

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a small saucepot over medium-high heat, gently simmer sugar and lime juice until sugar has dissolved, creating a simple syrup. Let cool.
2. In a food processor, combine simple syrup, strawberries, and ginger. Blend until pureed, and pour mixture into a large bowl.
3. Whisk in rosé, and pour into a large container. Cover, and freeze until slushy.
4. Serve with mint sprigs, candied ginger, and fresh strawberries.



adorn Your Front Door in Style

Are you searching for a seasonal statement piece for your entryway? Look no further!

Your front door is the first thing people see when they visit your home—and one of the most prominent features you can see from the street. These three summery DIY wreaths add the perfect pop and warm welcome.

Bright Citrus *wreath*

MATERIALS:

Gardening gloves
Green floral wire
Greenery garland
Grapevine wreath
4–5 faux lemons
Hot-glue gun/
glue sticks
White faux flowers
Scissors

DIRECTIONS:

1. Using the floral wire, tie the garland onto the grapevine wreath.
2. Attach the lemons to the wreath using the hot glue gun, and let dry.
3. Cut the long stems off of the flowers so you're left with just the flowers, and attach to the wreath using the hot glue gun. Let dry.
4. Hang the wreath on your door.

Seashell Pine Cone *wreath*

MATERIALS:

Needle-nose pliers
Pine cones
3 cans blue spray paint
(choose different shades for
a varied look)
Grapevine wreath
Hot-glue gun/glue sticks
Assorted seashells/starfish
Fishing net

DIRECTIONS:

1. Using the pliers, twist and cut off the tops of the pine cones so that only the bottom halves remain.
2. Spray-paint the pine cones with three different shades of blue, and let them dry.
3. Position the pine cones on the wreath, attach them with hot glue, and let dry.
4. Repeat Step 3 for the seashells and starfish.
5. Weave the fishing net into the wreath.
6. Hang the wreath on your door.

Sweet Treat *wreath*

MATERIALS:

Gardening gloves
Chicken wire
12-inch foam half-ball
Wire/zip ties
Wire cutters
Needle-nose pliers
Hot-glue gun/
glue sticks
Burlap
Brown faux flowers
White faux flowers
Pink faux flowers
Red faux flowers
String

DIRECTIONS:

1. Using the chicken wire, mold a cone shape for the base of the wreath. Make sure that the top opening is wide enough for the foam half-ball to tightly fit inside.
2. Use wire or zip ties to close up the wire frame seam, and cut down any excess chicken wire. Note: Be sure to use wire cutters to remove the sharp ends and/or needle-nose pliers to bend back the ends.
3. Wrap the burlap around the cone shape until the chicken wire is no longer exposed. Close the seam with hot glue, and let dry.
4. Place the foam half-ball inside of the cone, and remove any excess chicken wire.
5. Cut the floral stems down to size. The brown flowers should have the shortest stems, followed by the white flowers, then the pink ones, and finally, the red ones.
6. Arrange the stems in the following order from bottom to top: brown, white, pink, and red.
7. Attach a string from opposite ends of the cone, and hang the wreath on a hook on your door.

value-added *outdoor improvements*

written by: CHRISTY MURDOCK EDGAR



doors, siding, and roofing

They're not as hot as other outdoor projects, but these elements are among the most value-added improvements you can make to your home's exterior. Year after year, new exterior doors, garage doors, siding, and roofing lead the pack in return on investment (ROI). Remember, these improvements don't have to be strictly utilitarian—they can contribute to updating and upgrading your home's curb appeal as well. Go for a different color, a different material, and a different look, and enhance these updates with new exterior lighting and hardware for maximum impact.

landscaping updates

One of the most cost-effective ways to add value, no matter what your plans are for selling your home, is planting trees. Offering a host of benefits, including improving your ecological footprint, savings on heating and cooling costs, and appreciation year after year, mature trees add beauty and value to your home and to your neighborhood.

In addition, consistently well-maintained landscaping can make a big difference in the way your home looks without breaking the bank or requiring weekend-warrior DIY credentials. Consider using a lawn service or installing an irrigation system to help your lawn reach its full potential.

patios and decks

Patios and decks are always popular upgrades, and they generally recoup much of their cost. Take a look at what your local market will bear before deciding on an over-the-top, elaborate patio or deck. In the South, where such spaces are used practically year-round, multiple levels, pergolas, and other bells and whistles may be major selling points. In the North, though, they will

There's no time like the present to turn your attention to your outdoor spaces. Whether you are updating your home for a quick sale or want to choose a project that will contribute to increased equity down the road, it's important to choose wisely and with an eye on the projects that are popular in your local market.

Within the last year, outdoor spaces have become even more important and attractive than ever before. Use the tips below to highlight the beauty of your yard and improve your home's curb appeal.





probably seem like overkill and lose much of their ROI due to increased maintenance costs.

pools

Geography is a major factor in determining the return on investment for a pool. In some markets, and in many luxury properties, a pool may be considered a must-have. In others, it is a liability and an unnecessary expense. In addition, positive ROI on a pool installation is difficult to create, since it's an expensive upgrade with high ongoing expenses for maintenance and upkeep. A general rule of thumb is not to install a pool unless it's something you and your family will enjoy and is something that will enhance your quality of life during the years you are living in your home.

outdoor kitchens and dining rooms

Also called a summer kitchen in some markets,

an outdoor kitchen can provide a beautiful setting for outdoor lunches, dinners, and entertaining opportunities. The key to enhancing your ROI with an outdoor kitchen? Scale. While a luxury property might require extreme upgrades, for most homes, an inset grill, stainless steel ice chest and drawers, and sufficient counter space are all that's required for a functional outdoor kitchen. Add an amply sized table and chairs with a roof or pergola for even more hosting space.

firepits and seating

Though summer is warm for the majority of the country, the evenings can sometimes turn cooler in some places, especially at the beginning and end of the season. A large firepit or fire bowl with seating makes a perfect place to cozy up for a long evening of marshmallow roasting and storytelling with family and friends. As a bonus, fire features can range from elaborate gas-powered setups to simple, cost-effective

DIY projects—meaning they're a value-added update you can afford no matter your budget.

pet projects

For many buyers, pets are a major consideration, so projects that appeal to pet parents are particularly popular selling features. These can include:

- Pet-friendly fencing options or dog runs
- Animal pools or bathing stations
- Climate-controlled doghouse
- Dog potty areas
- Pet-friendly landscaping
- Splash fountain water feature

Since 67 percent of US households own a pet, a marketing plan that includes pets may make your home the top choice for even more buyers in your area.

projects with rental potential

When it comes to renovations, projects that offer additional financial stability are perhaps the best investments of all. If your property includes a carriage house, guest house, pool house, or garage, you may be able to create a desirable rental unit. For convertible spaces in your main home, like an attic or a basement, a separate entrance, porch, and outdoor space may create even more impact and marketability. If you don't want to rent the space out yourself, use it for guests or as an in-law suite now, and then market its rental potential when you decide to sell.

Don't forget to include additional features like outdoor lighting and audio to enhance your updated space. For upgraded landscaping, ensure that you have a plan in place to keep it healthy and optimally maintained, no matter the season.

recipes by: PATTERSON WATKINS

Sensational SUMMER DISHES

What better way to celebrate summer than by indulging in meals made from in-season ingredients? These recipes are perfect for serving at your next barbecue—they're simple, scrumptious, and highlight the freshest flavors available this time of year.

GRILLED GREEN GODDESS SALAD | serves 4

Ingredients:

½ cup olive oil ½ cup mayonnaise

Salad:

1 head romaine, split ½ teaspoon salt

1 head radicchio, split ¼ teaspoon pepper

1 bunch kale 1 cup sprouts

1 bunch spinach 1 cup pea shoots

Salad dressing:

1 avocado, peeled, cored, and sliced

2 tablespoons sunflower seeds

3 tablespoons feta cheese crumbles

Lemon wedges, for garnish

1 lemon, juiced

1 garlic clove, peeled and minced

Instructions:

1. Heat the grill to medium-high heat, and brush with oil. Grill the lettuces for 2–3 minutes, just until grill marks form and the lettuces are slightly charred. Chop into bite-sized pieces, and keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

2. For the salad dressing: Place the buttermilk, chives, parsley, cilantro, lemon juice, and garlic in a blender. Puree until smooth. Add the mayonnaise to a medium bowl, and whisk in the buttermilk mixture. Season with salt and pepper, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

3. In a large serving bowl, toss the grilled lettuces together with the toppings. Drizzle with the salad dressing, and serve with lemon wedges.



photo by: shana smith

RASPBERRY-PEACH ICEBOX CAKE | serves 6–8

Ingredients:

Filling:

- 12 ounces white chocolate chips, melted
- 2 cups cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup frozen raspberries, thawed and pureed
- 2 cups whipped topping, with ½ cup reserved for garnish
- 1 cup frozen peaches, thawed and pureed
- 1 box of graham crackers

Garnishes:

- Fresh peaches
- Fresh raspberries
- Mint sprigs

Instructions:

1. Divide melted chocolate, cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla. Place the first half of these ingredients in an electric mixer, fitted with a paddle attachment, with the raspberry puree, and blend until smooth.
2. Scrape mixture into a large bowl with ½ cup of the whipped topping. Fold together until combined, and set aside. Clean out the mixing bowl, and repeat steps with the peach puree.
3. Line a loaf pan with plastic wrap, with extra hanging over the pan, and dollop ½ cup of whipped topping on the bottom. Top with graham crackers, and gently press down. Pipe peach layer, top with graham crackers, and gently press down. Repeat this process for raspberry filling, and continue layering until the peach and raspberry creams are gone.
4. Top the final layer with graham crackers, and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 24 hours. When ready to serve, uncover the plastic wrap from the top of the loaf pan and invert onto a plate. Remove the pan and plastic wrap. Spread remaining whipped topping, and garnish with peaches, raspberries, and mint before slicing and serving.



summer safety:



From backyard barbecues to beach trips to fireworks displays, summer has it all—including some inherent hazards. However, by being careful and using good judgment, you and your family can stay safe all season long.

FAMILY AND PETS

- Keep your skin and head as covered as possible, even on cloudy days.
- Use water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen that has a minimum SPF rating of 30.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or every ninety minutes if swimming.
- Keep car windows cracked if possible, and let the car cool before touching the hot seats.
- Don't leave family members or pets in a hot car, even for a few minutes.
- Take your dog for a walk early in the morning or late in the evening.
- Test surfaces such as asphalt with the back of your hand to make sure the ground isn't too hot for your pet's paws.

IT'S A CINCH!

GRILLING

- Never leave a lit grill unattended.
- Make sure everyone, including pets, stays clear of the grill.
- Keep the grill out in the open and at least five feet away from structures and trees.
- Use proper grilling tools that are made specifically for cooking on the grill.
- Always follow the grill's instructions.
- If coals have already been ignited, never add charcoal starter fluid.

BEACH

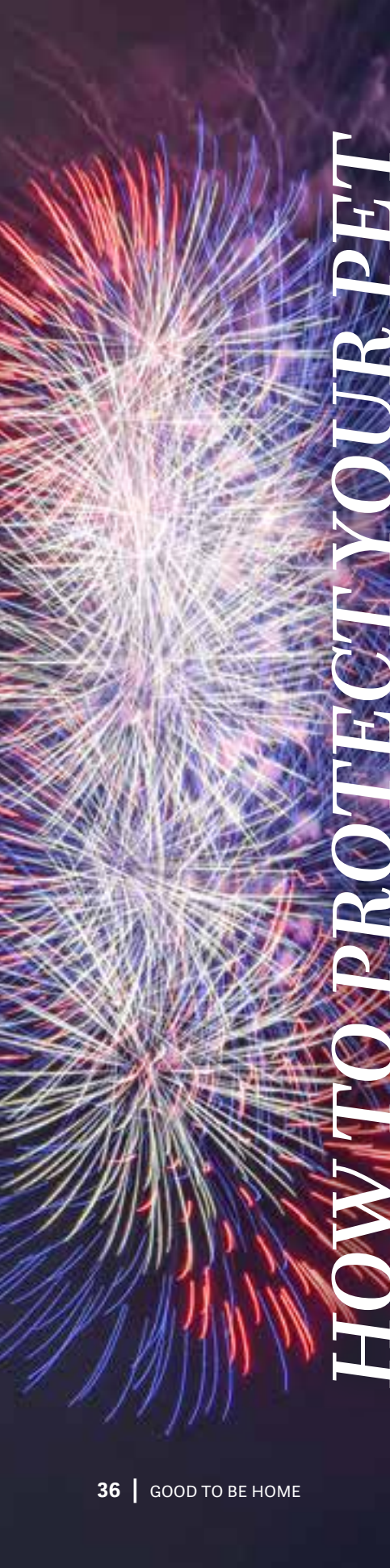
- Check the local weather conditions before you leave for the beach.
- Pack enough water to keep everyone hydrated throughout the day.
- Make sure that young children have properly fitting life jackets.
- Keep a close eye on young children.

- Do not dive headfirst into the water.
- Always swim with a buddy.
- Be aware of the area's potential for rip currents, and avoid water that has them.
- Do not go in the water after consuming alcohol.

FIREWORKS*

- Never allow small children to handle fireworks.
- Always follow the instructions on the packaging.
- Keep a supply of water nearby as a precaution.
- Never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, or flammable materials.
- Ensure that spectators remain a safe distance from the fireworks being lit.
- Properly dispose of all firework materials by soaking them in water before putting them in the trash.

**Be sure to check your city and state firework laws beforehand.*



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PET FROM FIREWORKS



Summer is one of the most exciting times of year, offering plenty of fireworks, delicious food, and fun. Although all these things may be a blast for us, they could be troublesome, if not downright dangerous, for our four-legged friends.

When you're proactive about protecting your pet, however, he can enjoy the season along with everyone else!

If your pet is one of many affected by fireworks displays and firecrackers, follow these tips to keep him safe and content.

Test for the quietest area of your home

Look around your house for a relatively quiet place to keep your pet during the fireworks display. Make sure the spot is large enough for him to feel comfortable, and leave a toy or another distraction to keep him occupied.

If you're traveling for fireworks, leave your pet at home

Even if you think your pet won't mind the fireworks show, it's best to leave him in a safe spot at home. If the loud noises aren't a bother, the large crowds could make it harder to locate your pet if he accidentally slips out of sight.

Don't forget about unlit fireworks

Always keep pets away from fireworks, used or not. Chemicals in fireworks, like arsenic, are extremely harmful if ingested, and the fireworks might look like an appealing toy to chew on if left out in the open.

Be sure your pet is wearing ID just in case

In case of emergency, it's important to ensure your pet is wearing ID so that he can be easily returned to you should he run away.

When all else fails, consult a vet

If you aren't able to find a quiet spot at home to keep your pet or are seriously concerned about his anxiety, talk to a veterinarian about other potential ways to help curb his fears.



WHY NOW IS A *Great* TIME TO TAP INTO YOUR HOME'S EQUITY



written by: CHRISTY MURDOCK EDGAR

If you're a homeowner, you're in luck. American homeowners are currently enjoying a boom in residential equity value. According to CoreLogic's *Homeowner Equity Insights Report*, approximately 63 percent of US homeowners experienced an equity increase of more than 10.8 percent year over year between the third quarter of 2019 and the third quarter of 2020. That represents a combined equity value of more than \$1 trillion in just one year. During the same period, negative equity fell by 18.3 percent year over year, resulting in greater security and financial stability for hundreds of thousands of homeowners.

Much of this increase is due to the price growth generated by historically low interest rates and rising consumer demand. Tight inventory in many real estate markets resulted in multiple offer situations and homes selling well above asking price—and above comparable market values.

In addition, some markets that generally do not see significant price fluctuations became more desirable as in-town dwellers sought increased space in suburban

and rural areas. Generous long-term work-from-home policies further boosted the appeal of these markets, which were often seen as safer and more cost-effective.

While rising home prices initially generated fears of a real estate bubble, economists predict continued strength in the real estate market at-large, as pent-up demand continues this year. In addition, continuing record-low interest rates contribute to affordability, even when homes are selling above market value.





Home values are seemingly changing by the day,

AND NO ONE IS BETTER POSITIONED TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT ON TODAY'S MARKET THAN A REAL ESTATE AGENT OR BROKER.

HOW TO GET THE *Most* OUT OF YOUR HOME'S EQUITY



This increase in equity makes now a great time to sell or to otherwise tap into the equity in your home. If you are looking to put all of that unexpected potential to work, here are some things to keep in mind to maximize your home's equity value.

MAKE NEEDED REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Now is the right time for ensuring that your home is in tip-top condition. Many homeowners have spent the pandemic becoming intimately familiar with their home's quirks—with small annoyances that had previously gone unnoticed. If you haven't already, it's time to start addressing minor problems before they become major ones.

If you have or are obtaining a home equity line of credit (HELOC), use it to make needed repairs and to upgrade your space if needed. If your home is out of step with most of those in your area—either in square footage or in terms of fixtures and finishes—it may be time for an update. This will ensure that you both enjoy your time in the home and maintain it in a way that will make it more marketable when it comes time to sell.

OPTIMIZE VIRTUAL MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

If you're considering selling your home, talk to a real

estate professional about virtual marketing platforms and strategies so that you can successfully compete with other homes on the market and engage with potential buyers. In many cases, obtaining top dollar for your home sale is a matter of ensuring that homebound or long-distance buyers have options, including video and virtual tours, that allow them to connect with the space.

Be sure to declutter your home, and talk to an agent about strategies to optimize your home's appearance on video. More light and a more streamlined look will go a long way toward ensuring that your home is properly positioned for eager buyers who are interested in your market.

GO FOR COST-EFFECTIVE UPGRADES

If you're thinking about selling your home and want to make sure you get the most out of its current equity potential, opt for upgrades that offer high return on investment (ROI) along with cost-effectiveness. These include simple improvements like a new front door and updated landscaping for low-cost, high-impact changes.

Be careful of the law of diminishing returns when making home improvements, however, as some perceived upgrades may not be right for your market. A huge new addition may make your home more livable but may also make it far too large for your



neighborhood. An expensive and elaborate outdoor space may be fun in the summer but may be out of step with buyer demand in your market. Ensure that the changes you make offer proven, reliable returns.

CONSIDER REFINANCING TO A 15-YEAR MORTGAGE

If you decide to stay put, you can boost your home's equity by refinancing your current 30-year mortgage into a 15-year mortgage. The record-low interest rates from the past year may make it possible for you to find a product with much faster equity-building potential while keeping your monthly payments almost the same.

In order to get the benefit of a mortgage refinance, make sure you plan to stay in the home for a while—ideally, at least five years. Remember, just as with your original mortgage, there will be significant closing costs associated with your refinance. You may not be able to recoup those costs if you move within a couple of years, even with the equity-boosting benefit of the new mortgage.

TALK TO A REAL ESTATE AGENT ABOUT YOUR PLANS

Home values are seemingly changing by the day, and no one is better positioned to understand the impact on today's market than a real estate agent or broker. A real estate expert can help you crunch the numbers, examine sale prices for comparable properties in your area, and come up with an updated market valuation based on current conditions.





make your interior lighter and brighter *for summer*

Every so often, changing your home's interior can make a difference in discovering new ways to love your living spaces. Here are some easy ideas to help you lighten and brighten up your home without having to knock down walls and crack open paint cans.

create fun centerpieces

Pick out a vase or glass bowl, and fill it with summer fruits like lemons or limes, bright candy, or even some store-bought or collected seashells for a beach theme. You could also fill a watering can with flowers for a rustic look. Pick one centerpiece or make a few arrangements to add to any room in your home. If you don't want to splurge, consider visiting your local dollar or discount craft store for vases and fillings.

incorporate lace

Lace is an elegant, timeless, and simple material you

can't go wrong using in your home. Toss a white lace tablecloth or runner over your kitchen table for a delicate touch. Avoid using dark-colored lace, but if you also don't want to go with classic white, you could try other bright colors such as a light blue or green. Just be mindful that the color works with the rest of your interior.

If you're looking for a different way to incorporate lace, try it on your table coasters. Purchase inexpensive cork circles with an adhesive backing, and stick them onto your current coasters. Then glue lace doilies on top of the cork with hot or spray glue. It's an easy accent for summer that you can easily remove at the end of the season.

use mirrors

Make any room appear instantly bigger and brighter with mirrors. Mirrors reflect light, so adding them to

a room is sure to make it pop—especially if you place them across from a window. Look for mirrors with light-colored frames, or repaint the frame yourself.

If you're lacking space for a large mirror, try placing small circular mirrors in an arranged cluster for a playful and summery look.

place some plants

Incorporating a lot of plants and floral arrangements will bring your favorite summer outdoor vibes inside. Whether you choose real or fake plants is up to you—either will do the trick.

To display your pretty plants, try making a vertical plant wall, which can add height and brightness to your room. Be sure to choose an area that gets plenty of sunlight.

swap it out

Some easy seasonal switches include white or pastel pillows, throw blankets, and hand towels. Keep decor with fall and winter colors in storage, where it can be easily brought back out. Play with patterns to avoid using too many solid colors, which can make your rooms appear a bit washed out. Pinstripes or colorful graphic prints are perfect for this time of year.

let the light in

Sheer curtains are an awesome addition to your home during the summer because they allow the light to shine through. Use neutral colors that complement other colors in the room, or choose a pastel color to make this your room's pop of color. Replace any dark curtain rods with light, neutral-toned ones for a consistent appearance.



how to maintain **YOUR GARDEN THIS SEASON**

written by: LAUREN DEPIERO

When we think of gardening, we usually think of springtime—but gardens can flourish in summer as well, as long as you provide a little more TLC. The tips below can help keep your garden thriving during the hottest months of the year and beyond.

Eliminate dead parts of plants

Spring plants, like tulips and daffodils, can lose foliage as summer goes on. Watch out for yellowing leaves, which you should remove from the plants. This will ensure that infection does not spread to other leaves on the plant or flower. However, make sure you never remove green leaves.

Prep the soil

During summer months, weeds are more likely to grow in your garden. You can prepare for this and prevent excessive weeds by adding mulch and weed mats. Also make sure to fertilize your soil so that your plants get the correct nutrients; ask someone in your local gardening store about which fertilizer is best for your specific types of plants. To water your garden in the summer, use drip irrigation if you can, and water your plants early or late in the day—this prevents water from evaporating during peak sun hours.

You can also till the soil so that nutrients and water can move evenly through it and reach all the plants. (Just make sure to avoid any utility lines or pipes that may lie underneath the soil.) Add fruit and vegetable skins or crushed eggshells to nourish your garden, even if you're already using fertilizer.

Keep it cool

If you're trying to start a garden during the summer months, it's helpful to place it underneath a tree or in a shaded area. If you've already planted flowers or vegetables, try planting a small tree near them. For good measure and an extra cooling effect, you can install a small fountain or portable water feature so that the mist will cool your plants.



Choose your plants carefully.

There are many vegetables that actually grow best during the summer months. For example, this is a great time to plant beans, celery, corn, peppers, squash, and zucchini. All of these vegetables do well in warm soil with extended sunlight hours. You should also keep in mind that insects and hummingbirds can pollinate your garden, helping your plants thrive. Choose native plants, such as annual sunflowers, zinnias, and wildflower mixes, to attract pollinators during this time of year.

Take advantage of the warm weather to start new projects.

If your garden has a drainage issue that you've been meaning to tackle, the warmth of the summer months is the perfect motivator to get you outside to fix up your space. Similarly, if you've wanted to add a fence, pond, or patio to your yard, now is the time to do it. Just be mindful of local building codes and ordinances before starting any new project.

Summer is the new spring for gardening! With some simple strategies, you can keep your garden flourishing during the hottest time of the year.

The inclusion of useful tips is one of the top reasons 58 percent of recipients have referred the professional who sent them the magazine in the past 12 months.



For all that you put into your home, **YOU DESERVE TO GET THE** *most* OUT.





Stacey Shanner, Realtor®

The Shanners
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info@remindermedia.com

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Front of Tear Out Card 2

watermelon basil
frosé



Stacey Shanner
Realtor®


Direct: (866) 458-4226
Office: (610) 878-5000
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Watermelon & basil combine for the perfect refreshing summer cocktail!

SERVES 4

SHANNER REALTY



Back of Tear Out Card 2

ingredients

- ½ c. sugar
- ½ c. lime juice
- 2½ c. watermelon, chopped
- 3 oz. triple sec
- 1 bottle rosé
- 2 tbsp. fresh basil, chopped

Garnishes

- basil sprigs
- watermelon slices

directions

1. In a small saucepot over medium-high heat, gently simmer sugar and lime juice until sugar has dissolved, creating a simple syrup. Let cool.
2. In a food processor, combine simple syrup, watermelon, and triple sec. Blend until pureed, and pour the mixture into a large bowl.
3. Whisk in rosé and fresh basil, and pour into a large container. Cover, and freeze until slushy.
4. Serve with basil sprigs and watermelon slices.

Calories: 249 | Carbs: 36g | Protein: 0.9g | Sugar: 48g | Fat: 0.2g



Stacey Shanner
The Shanners
1100 First Avenue
Suite 200
King Of Prussia, PA 19406

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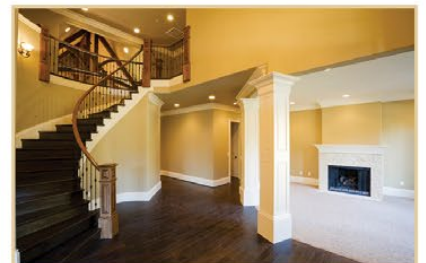
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