Yumm...
Michigan strawberries
This year’s crop will be ready in early- to mid-June
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Get your party started
Ideas for your summer backyard entertaining
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Garden tools go hi-tech
Page 9
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A pergola or gazebo can 
provide beauty, shade and a place to relax

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

You’ll likely find garden inspiration in a variety of places, and one might be a relaxed outdoor feature, such as a gazebo or pergola.

Gazebos and pergolas both provide a sheltered area to enjoy the outdoors or entertain guests.

By definition, a pergola is a structure or archway with a framework covered in climbing or trailing plants. They are either square or rectangular consisting of posts and beams, but no walls or roof. Freestanding or attached to your home, a pergola is usually designed to be a shaded walkway or place of relaxation. These structures are usually built to highlight the natural beauty of climbing flowers, but won’t help usually built to highlight the natural beauty of climbing flowers, but won’t help any trees you choose to use.

A gazebo, on the other hand, is a free-standing structure that’s usually round, octagon or hexagonal, featuring open sides, often with rails and seating that allows ample room for entertaining. The roof slopes upward to a cone and is generally enclosed, protecting guests from inclement weather.

Gazebos can vary in size from a few feet in diameter to large structures that can hold a band for outside performances.

The price of a gazebo generally runs higher than the price of the same size pergola due to the added features of a solid roof, rails, seating and a solid floor, but there are many variations in each that affect the price. Some elaborate pergolas garner a price that exceeds the cost of a modest gazebo.

Average cost of pergola:

$3,100

Average cost of gazebo:

$5,720

Adding to the relaxation, beauty and ambience of these garden structures are the other elements that will bring your entire landscape together. You may want to add features like green labyrinths, cobblestone pathways, small ponds, water fountains, colorful flower-beds and small round trees around your yard. You’re only limited by your own imagination and your budget when creating your own private refuge.

Before undertaking any project like this, decide whether you want to do-it-yourself or hire a pro. You’ll also want to check with your municipality about building permits.

SUMMARY
You can totally change the look and ambiance of your backyard by adding a garden structure like a pergola or gazebo.

Light your entryway, pathways and landscaping for beauty and security

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

A little goes a long way when it comes to lighting your outdoor landscape. That’s because your eyes need less light outdoors than they do indoors, to see light, shadow and pattern.

In designing your outdoor lighting, walk around your yard at night and envision how and when you want to use your outdoor living spaces, advises bhg.com. You will want to light some areas for safety and security, and others for design and function.

Outdoor lights have a major impact on the atmosphere and mood of your landscape. They can provide a romantic mood along a pathway, or a festive mood when string lights are dangling amidst your outdoor dining space.

Lighting is generally divided into three different categories: overall, task or accent. Overall provides light for a whole room or space, task lighting is used for a specific purpose, such as to light a path and accent lights are to draw attention to an object or area, usually with spotlights or floodlights.

Here are a few ways to use outdoor lighting at your home:

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL LIGHTING

Some areas of your yard will require both functional and decorative light fixtures, such as outdoor sconces for overall lighting and garden fixtures and string lights for a decorative touch.

ENTRANCE LIGHTING

You’ll want to light up your entryway for both security reasons and also to provide an attractive entrance for your home. You can use wall-mounted fixtures and floodlights to create a secure focal point to your entryway.

PATH LIGHTING

Walkways, paths and driveways are key areas to illuminate, so people can safely navigate their way through your yard. A series of path lights not only provide light, but also set the mood for your landscape.

Here are a few ways to use outdoor lighting:

- Use overall lighting and garden fixtures, such as outdoor sconces for overall lighting and garden fixtures and string lights for a decorative touch.
- Use task lighting for functional purposes, such as lighting a path or illuminating an entrance.
- Use accent lighting to highlight specific areas or features.

ILLUMINATE on 14

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CALL FOR A FREE ESTIMATE
Michigan strawberries are truly a gem to be enjoyed, one sweet bite at a time, after a winter of eating oversized, bland strawberries imported from other states. They’re a calorie bargain and a nutritious powerhouse. One cup of fresh strawberries contains only 49 calories, and is a good source of folate and potassium, as well as vitamin C, manganese and dietary fiber.

At Spicer Orchards in Hartland Township, u-pick and market strawberries are tentatively set to be ready in mid-June.

“We’re expecting a full crop,” said Will Cartwright, crop manager at Spicer Orchards. “We grow three or four different varieties. The season is short, usually only three to four weeks.”

Unless, of course, you’d like to join many other backyard gardeners in growing your own delectable berries. Strawberries are the most popular small fruit for backyard growers, and it’s no wonder — they’re sweet, nutritious and so versatile as a snack or dessert.

While raspberries, grapes and blueberries require multiple years before producing much fruit, some strawberry varieties will produce a good crop by mid-summer of the planting year.

**STEP #1 – SELECT THE RIGHT VARIETY**

Home growers can pick from either June bearing or everbearers, according to Michigan State University Extension. June bearing strawberries form flower buds in the fall as the day length decreases. In Michigan, they flower in May with the harvest beginning in early to mid-June and lasting three to four weeks.

June-bearing strawberries produce their first crop the second year after planting, and come in early, mid-season and late varieties.

Everbearing strawberries begin bearing at the same time as June bearers, but they will continue to produce berries throughout summer and into fall.

When looking at flavor varieties, look for “dessert quality” with a rating of excellent or very good.

Another consideration is processing quality, so that frozen berries won’t turn to mush when thawed.

Pick a variety with a good rating for susceptibility or resistance to root and leaf diseases.

**STEP #2 – HOW MANY PLANTS?**

For fresh use and just a little to freeze or share, 25 plants should be plenty for a small family. You’ll place the plants about a foot apart.

**STEP #3 – MAKE THE BED**

Strawberries will grow best in the ground in full sun, where no strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, eggplants or potatoes have grown for the last four years, because these plants all share the same soil-borne diseases and insect issues.

Before planting, work some fertilizer into the bed, using a product designed for strawberries or a slow release 10-10-10 garden fertilizer.

**STEP #4 – PLANT BEFORE THE LAST FROST**

Plant strawberries in Michigan just before the last frost is expected. Light decreases. In Michigan, they flower in May with the harvest beginning in early to mid-June and lasting three to four weeks.

June-bearing strawberries produce their first crop the second year after planting, and come in early, mid-season and late varieties.

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Pick a variety with a good rating for susceptibility or resistance to root and leaf diseases.
Traditional charcoal and gas grills are just the starting point for outdoor cooking possibilities

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

It’s time to fire up the grill and enjoy one of the tastiest parts of summer. While 80 percent of Americans own at least one grill, today’s love affair with outdoor cooking has gone far beyond the traditional gas or charcoal grill.

Now people are experimenting with gadgets like smokers, pellet grills, Brazilian-style rotisserie grills, plus high-end charcoal and gas grills with many features.

If you want to move your outdoor cooking repertoire “beyond the grill,” here are a few gadgets to get you started:

WEBER SMOKY MOUNTAIN WATER SMOKER

This traditional smoker for burning hardwood charcoal is champion enough to win major barbecue competitions, yet easy enough to use at home.

This upright model has been around for years, and does double duty as a regular backyard kettle grill for cooking burgers or steaks. It uses a water tray to keep the food cooking low and slow, and can handle a couple of full rib racks and a whole brisket at the same time.

In three different sizes, this grill is within most budgets, priced between $200 and $400. It’s a true classic.

PELLET GRILLS

The fastest growing category of outdoor cookery, pellet grills do everything from pro level barbecuing to seared steak grilling more easily than any other device, according to the Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association.

Pellet grills burn small hardwood pellets about the size of a pencil eraser, which can be bought in bags of all different types of woods. With an electronic igniter and digital thermostat, like an oven, all you have to do is push a button.

They tend to be pricier than other grills, running from $400 to $4,000, with moderate models about $1,000.

BACKYARD RIODIZIO

If you’re a fan of Brazilian-style steak houses, you’ll love this style of cooking. In Brazil, a wide variety of meats are cooked on rotating skewers and served from the tableside.

TOP RATED CHARCOAL GRILL FOR 2016
Weber Performer Deluxe - $399
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TOP RATED GAS GRILL FOR 2016
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(Rated by gas-grills-review.com)

Looking for a Mortgage? JUST ASK.
Enjoy family time together and get the most out of summer with these backyard ideas

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

It’s summertime and the living is easy. You can create your own backyard living spaces for active family fun, from swimming pools to picnicking, croquet and more, with these ideas from hgtv.com.

SEESEAWS
On one end of the backyard, parents can relax dining on the deck under a curtained pergola. On the other end, kids can play for hours on handmade seesaws.

TRAMPOLINE
A padded and pillowed trampoline is not only perfect for sky-high jumping, but also for lounging and laughing with friends, when it’s time for a little relaxation.

LOUNGING AROUND
This outdoor deck can accommodate the whole crew, with built-in benches and wooden stools. String lights and a flat screen TV add to the festive ambiance and up the entertainment factor of your backyard.

KIDS’ PLAY AREA
This “kids only” backyard play space features a hammock, hopscotch steps and a pint-sized chalkboard for endless hours of outdoor fun.

OUTDOOR MOVIE SCREEN
When the sun sets, gather friends and family for a movie everyone can enjoy. Don’t forget the popcorn.

TUMBLE MAT
If your kids enjoy gymnastics, why not create an outdoor tumble mat to encourage them to get outdoors and enjoy their sport. The parents can sit back on the nearby entertainment deck, or take their turn doing somersaults.

YARD GAMES
Even a tiny backyard can have a space devoted to kids’ games and pet fun.

PICNICKING AND CROQUET
It won’t take much landscaping to create a family friendly picnicking area in your backyard, where you can also enjoy croquet or other yard games. A fire pit nearby adds to the coziness of the spot.

MINI GOLF
Who wouldn’t love to have a miniature golf hole or two, or putting green in their own backyard? Fun for all ages, this will be an activity for everyone to enjoy.

ROWBOAT SANDBOX
Bring new life to an old wooden sandbox by letting your child become captain of the backyard. If you’d prefer a different themed sandbox, you can get many ideas online or at your nearby home center.

BASKETBALL COURT
This half-size basketball court next to an outdoor living space, sun deck and swimming pool provides outdoor fun for everyone.

BACKYARD SPLASH PADS
You can have a splash pad professionally designed for your yard, for about $15,000 to $65,000, or you can have some do-it-yourself backyard water fun, with plastic sheeting, buckets, PVC pipes, garden hoses, etc. For more ideas, visit bobvila.com.

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GET YOUR party STARTED

From ‘walking tacos’ to a popcorn bar, here are several ideas for your summer open house or backyard entertaining.

By Sally Rummel
newo@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

It's finally spring, and the season for summer entertaining is just around the corner. Whether you're planning a summer barbecue, a graduation open house or a family reunion, here are party ideas to help you throw a party your guests won't soon forget.

• Make mood-setting floating candles that ward off bugs with citronella oil.
• If kids are among your guests, make a water balloon piñata that they can swing at with a plastic bat.
• Make portable "walking tacos" in lunch-sized bags of Fritos or Doritos.
• For a beach-themed party, use buckets as serving dishes for snacks, and shovels as "scoops."
• Keep kids entertained with a giant bubble station.
• Cook a giant batch of corn on the cob with two kettles of boiling water poured over corn in a cooler. Let it set for 30 minutes.
• Serve balled fruit in cake-style ice cream cones. Put a cupcake liner on the inside to keep the cone from getting soggy.
• Make ice shot glasses for perfectly chilled liquor. This way, you don't need to buy a mold.
• Make a shallow plywood box and set on top of cinder blocks for a bar-like DIY cooler.
• Make a burger bar so everyone can dress their grilled burger to their own taste.
• A sunscreen and bug spray station will keep everyone protected from summer's pests.
• A cupcake liner attached to a straw keeps bugs out of sugary drinks.
• Cut up a few 2x4s and make a giant Jenga set for all ages.
• Hang a giant picture frame from a high tree and make a fun outdoor photo booth.
• Use a projector and a poster board to make a decorative banner sign.
• A massive chalkboard menu is a fun way to inform guests about all their menu choices. A piece of plywood painted with chalkboard paint would work just fine.
• Play a fun game of glow-in-the-dark ring toss with glow stick necklaces.
• A s'mores bar is a fun dessert for fireside festivities.
• Scoop the fruit out of oranges and use the shells as decorative bowls for sorbet.
• Tin cans become festive lanterns with a coat of paint and a few holes.
• Cardboard berry boxes lined with parchment paper make disposable, eco-friendly salad bowls.
• You can buy or rent a projector for outdoor movie night.
• Make a popcorn bar using whimsical plastic containers to hold all different flavors, plus seasonings and toppings.
• Use wine bottles as vases for gorgeous flower arrangements.
• Make sure to rent outdoor tents to add a festive flair, and in case of a stray rain shower.

Sources: Viralnova.com, Realsimple.com, 247moms.com, milkallergymom.com, a girl in paradise.com, cardstore.com, viralnova.com, noveltystreet.com, ziggityzoom.com

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By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

To put your best gardening foot forward this spring, here are a few gadgets that can make your thumb a little greener, according to Bob Vila, home improvement expert.

• **GARDENER’S HANDBOOK APP FOR ANDROID**
  You can have a pro gardener by your side 24/7 with this free Android app, which contains 10 chapters full of DIY gardening tips, landscape ideas and other useful outdoor information.
  Cost: Free

• **PARROT FLOWER POWER PLANT MONITOR**
  This wireless sensor will monitor your plant’s moisture, temperature, light and fertilizer levels, then will relay this information to your smartphone via Bluetooth technology.
  Cost: $60

• **GARDEN PLAN PRO IPAD**
  This app acts as a visual aid in laying out your patches before you pick up a spade. It also provides weather station data, advises the best plants for your region and offers information on more than 140 different species of flowers and vegetables.
  Cost: $7.99

• **INFRAGRAM**
  This DIY camera uses infrared technology to analyze the health of your plants and gardens. Fun for kids and adults, novices or pros, this tool educates while illuminating the secret life of your garden.
  Cost: $62

• **CORDLESS POLE SAW**
  “Go Green” with the rechargeable battery-powered G-Max pole saw from GreenWorks. Its cordless design features an 8-inch bar and chain for easy branch trimming. A collapsible shaft extends from 5 to 8 feet to reach a variety of trimming heights.
  Cost: $170

• **VEGIBEE**
  This go-to gadget imitates the high-frequency vibrations of a bee’s wings during pollination. The vibrations release pollen onto a spoon, which the gardener can then use to hand-pollinate other plants. The reward is a 30 percent increase in crop yield.
  Cost: $29

• **NETATMO WEATHER STATION**
  This personal weather station monitors the indoor environment as well as the outdoor weather, including CO2 concentration and Air Quality Index report. Netatmo links to your smartphone, keeping track of what’s best for you, your plants and your garden.
  Cost: $149

• **GARDEN OWL**
  This realistic-looking Garden Defense Electronic Owl adds movement and sound. Its sensors detect that garden pests are near and it will turn its head in that direction and hoot, scaring the critters away.
  Cost: $45
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**BEST Strawberry Shortcake**

*(courtesy of Taste of Home)*

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 T. sugar
- 1 ¼ t. baking powder
- ¼ t. salt
- 1/4 cup plus 2 t. cold butter, divided

**DIRECTIONS:**

In a small bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut in ¼-cup butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In a small bowl, combine egg and half-and-half; stir into crumb mixture just until moistened. Spread batter into 6-inch round baking pan coated with cooking spray, slightly building up the edges. Bake at 450 degrees for 13-15 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack.

In a small bowl, beat whipping cream, confectioner’s sugar and vanilla until soft peaks form. Cut cake horizontally into two. Soften remaining butter. Place bottom layer on a serving plate; spread with butter. Top with half of strawberries and cream mixture. Repeat layers of cake, strawberries and cream.

---

**STRAWBERRIES**

Continued from Page 4

Frost will not hurt the leaves. The soil level should cover the roots and be just at the base of the crown. Water well after planting.

**STEP #5 – USE MULCH AROUND PLANTS**

Plastic mulch is good for cold areas, as it helps warm the soil. Lay it down on the soil first, and then cut holes in to plant. Straw, wood chips, shredded leaves or other organic mulches can be used around plants and in the rows to keep weeds at bay.

**STEP #6 – BASIC MAINTENANCE**

If you are treating everbearing strawberries as an annual, the chores are easy. Just allow the plants to grow, bear fruit, then take plants out and rotate to an area where you plant your strawberries each year.

Plants must have adequate moisture. Keep ripe berries picked often. Strawberries don’t ripen after they are picked. Pick only the red, ripe ones. Store in the refrigerator and don’t wash them until you are ready to use them.

---

**INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT STRAWBERRIES**

- Strawberries are the only fruit that wear their seeds on the outside. The average berry is adorned with about 200.
- Strawberries aren’t true berries like blueberries or even grapes, because technically, a berry has its seeds on the inside.
- Strawberries are members of the rose family.
- The strawberry plant is a perennial. It may not bear fruit immediately, but once it does, it will remain productive for about five years.
- Americans eat an average of five pounds of strawberries a year, between fresh and frozen fruits.
- California produces some 80 percent of the strawberries grown in the U.S. Every state in the U.S. and every province in Canada grow their own.

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6 easy-to-grow veggies in your garden

By Sally Rummel

news@tctimes.com, 810-629-6282

Whether you’re an experienced or novice gardener, your time is valuable. You want to spend your outdoor gardening time in the most productive way possible, by growing vegetables that are easy to grow in Michigan’s short growing season.

1) **TOMATOES**

A popular hometown vegetable, tomatoes are easy to grow as well as nutritious. In Michigan, they need to be started indoors to allow plants enough time to bear fruit. They can be planted outside when air and soil temperatures are warm enough, usually in mid- to late May. Staking or caging tomato plants helps maintain fruit quality.

2) **PEAS**

One of the oldest cultivated vegetables, peas are an easy and quick-growing vegetable for a Michigan garden. Michigan State University Extension recommends growing peas in early spring, as soon as you can work the ground. To lengthen the pea harvest period, plant both early and late varieties.

3) **BEANS**

Michigan is a major producer of dried beans, edamame, French or Italian beans, pole beans, wax beans, lima beans, dry beans, edamame, French or Italian beans will all grow with a minimum of effort. Beans need warm soil for germination, so plant them when soil temperature is above 60 degrees, usually not until the end of May in Michigan.

4) **ONIONS**

The most popular onion grown in Michigan is the pungent yellow globe onion, which does well with Michigan’s cool summers. Yellow onions keep well, so they are a good growing choice for those who want to store onions for later use.

5) **GREENS**

Whether you like Swiss chard, spinach, mustard, kale or collards, you can get a lot of nutrition for little effort in the garden.

6) **SWEET CORN**

Corn is relatively easy to grow, but it does require more garden space than other vegetables. Corn will grow in most types of soil, provided it is well drained. Plant in late May when soil has warmed. For best results, plant corn in blocks or squares with at least three rows, to encourage even pollination.

---

**Dave Lamb**

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**6 easy-to-grow veggies in your garden**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 egg
- ½ cup half-and-half cream
- 1 T. confectioner’s sugar
- 1/8 t. vanilla

**DIRECTIONS:**

In a small bowl, beat whipping cream, confectioners sugar and vanilla until soft peaks form. Cut cake horizontally into two. Soften remaining butter. Place bottom layer on a serving plate; spread with butter.

Top with half of strawberries and cream mixture. Repeat layers of cake, strawberries and cream.
Look at low maintenance deck materials to free up some relaxation time this summer

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com, 810-629-8282

Your backyard deck has all the makings for a blissful afternoon of relaxation. But if your deck is made out of wood, your idyllic summer weekends might be spent scrubbing, bleaching and staining, not to mention occasionally replacing a splintered, warped or rotten board.

This just might be the year you decide to do something different with your deck. One local homeowner decided that his 23-year-old cedar deck was in need of a makeover this spring. Not only that his 23-year-old cedar deck was in good shape,” he said, while replacing the top boards. “Basically, I’m re-decking it, with a different material.”

After a lot of research, he decided to go with PVC boards, using a company he found in Davison that actually manufactures PVC decking and railings. “It’s more expensive,” said this homeowner. “But it should last forever.”

He also mentioned that the stainless steel fasteners he used on the cedar deck 23 years ago have held up very well, but the galvanized screws had started to rust out.

If you’re looking for a more low maintenance, relaxing summer in your backyard, check out these building materials:

**COMPOSITE DECKING**

Composite boards are made of equal parts wood fiber and plastic, mixed with pigments, ultraviolet inhibitors and borate preservatives, then usually heated and extruded.

 Pros:
- Virtually indestructible, low maintenance, relaxing summer in your backyard, check out these building materials:
- Composite boards are made of equal parts wood fiber and plastic, mixed with pigments, ultraviolet inhibitors and borate preservatives, then usually heated and extruded.
- **COMPOSITE DECKING**
  - **Pros:**
    - Virtually indestructible, low maintenance, relaxing summer in your backyard, check out these building materials:
    - Composite boards are made of equal parts wood fiber and plastic, mixed with pigments, ultraviolet inhibitors and borate preservatives, then usually heated and extruded.
- **Cons:**
  - Slight plastic appearance, some colors may fade over time. Not all composite lumber can span traditional joist spacing. High initial cost. Can be hot on bare feet, especially dark composites.
  - **Popular brands:** Trex, ChoiceDek, SmartDeck, TimberTech.
- **Cost:** Start at $4 per square foot with premium products resembling tropical wood up to $7.20 per square foot.

**PVC (POLYVINYL CHLORIDE)**

This special type of resin plastic is very functional for a deck, and is available in various surface textures and unlimited colors.

 Pros:
- Easy installation, especially with its lightweight nature. It is resistant to moisture, bugs and rotting. It doesn’t need to be stained, painted or treated to maintain its good condition. PVC is also 100 percent recyclable.
- **Pros:**
  - Easy installation, especially with its lightweight nature. It is resistant to moisture, bugs and rotting. It doesn’t need to be stained, painted or treated to maintain its good condition. PVC is also 100 percent recyclable.
- **Cons:**
  - Prolonged exposure to UV rays ultimately causes it to fade, and it can become brittle and more susceptible to cracks. It’s difficult to repair a PVC deck, without replacing the entire deck.
  - **Popular brands:** Genovation, Azek.
- **Cost:** Average cost is $9.48 per square foot.

**SPRING CLEANING YOUR DECK**

Here’s how to wash your deck:

- Remove debris from in between deck boards using a putty knife, or buy a pole-type groove and crevice cleaner.
- Protect all shrubs and plantings. Wet them and cover with plastic sheeting.
- Choose an appropriate cleanser, based on your decking material. A PVC deck will require only warm water and a mild soap.
- Clean the deck. For a wood deck, use a paint roller, garden sprayer or stiff-bristled brush broom to apply the cleaner. Don’t let it pool. Don’t let the deck dry until you’ve scrubbed it clean. Let it soak about 10 minutes, then rinse thoroughly with water.
- For a composite deck, scrub with a soft brush. Do not use a pressure washer, which could permanently damage the decking and will void the warranty. Remove rust and leaf stains with a deck cleaner. For a vinyl deck, scrub in a circular motion using a stiff broom, then rinse thoroughly.

Source: houselogic.com

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**Sunday, May 15, 2016**

**THE GREAT OUTDOORS**

www.tctimes.com
You know the perfect burger when you taste it — the smoky, chargrilled outside and juicy goodness inside.

Here are some grilled burger basics from allrecipes.com:

• Use beef that is no leaner than 85 percent, for a juicier, more flavorful burger. But be aware, patties from higher fat meat will shrink more when they cook. If you shop at a grocery store or a butcher that grinds their own beef, choose coarsely ground beef for juicier burgers with a more pleasing texture. For ground chicken and turkey burgers, add a little olive oil to the mixture.

• Add just about anything you like to your burger mixture. Here are a few flavoring suggestions:
  • Fresh or dried herbs and spices
  • Dehydrated or fresh minced onion and garlic
  • Seasoning mixes for soups or salad dressings
  • Your favorite cheese, such as blue cheese, goat cheese, Gorgonzola, feta, Stilton, Cheddar, or pepperjack
  • Prepared sauces including BBQ sauce, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, Worcestershire sauce, hot pepper sauce, hoisin sauce, plum sauce, oyster sauce, salsa, or salad dressing
  • Other tidbits like olives, capers, chopped tomatoes, diced chiles or crumbled bacon.

• Wait on the salt. Salt will extract moisture from the meat, leaving you with a dry burger. Add salt just before you put it on the grill.

• Don’t mix too much. Use a light touch when combining seasonings with the ground beef. If you mix it too much, your burgers will be dense and heavy.

• Let flavors mingle. Leave the meat mixture (or patties) in the refrigerator for several hours to allow all the flavors to mingle.

• To form patties, wet your hands a little to keep the meat from sticking to them. If you make patties ahead of time, stack them on a plate separated by waxed paper and cover with plastic wrap before you put it in the refrigerator.

• A ¾-inch patty is ideal. To keep patties from swelling in the middle, make small indentations in the center.

• Make sure the grill is medium-low to medium heat. Keep the lid closed while cooking; it shortens cooking time and keeps burgers moist.

• Always start with a clean, oiled grill grate. This keeps burgers from sticking, extends the life of your grate, and helps put those beautiful grill marks on your patties.

• Turn only once. Don’t flatten your burgers with the spatula; it squeezes out flavorful juices.

• Cook burgers properly. Cook ground beef to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F (170 degrees F for poultry).
ILLUMINATE
Continued from Page 3
show the way, but they can also be a design element for your landscape. Solar lights, rope lighting, LED lights, and low voltage lights can all illuminate the pathways to your home.

ACCENT LIGHTING
Accent lights highlight focal points in a landscape, from architecture to trees, plants or water features. These lights can be installed at ground level and directed upward or be installed higher up and directed downward to simulate moonlight.

SECURITY LIGHTING
A motion-sensor floodlight will alert you to any movement around your home, providing you with a sense of security. Be careful with floodlights with too bright of lights, as they can create deep shadows where trespassers could hide.

STRING LIGHTS
This is a versatile and inexpensive lighting option for adding ambiance to an outdoor dining or entertainment area. You can string lights around an umbrella to provide enough light for function while setting a relaxed mood.

POOL LIGHTING
If one of your yard features is a pool, you can give your landscape a dramatic appeal and make swimming safer at night. Underwater lights turn your pool into a glowing focal point, and accent lights highlight the surrounding landscape around the pool.

GRILL
Continued from Page 5
known as churrascaria.

One new kit on the market sits atop any larger grill of any style and converts it into a home riadizio. A motorized back plate stands vertically and has revolving sockets for six skewers, which you can load in advance.

When you’re ready to cook, just light the grill, stick the skewers in and let them turn. The cooking is self-basting and you can adjust the heat of the grill.

This kit is priced at $498 and works on most good-sized gas grills, charcoal grills, even the Weber smoker mentioned above.

PARILLA GRILLS
Argentina is said to be the most barbecue-crazed country on earth with Argentinians consuming twice as much beef per capita as Americans.

Most of the beef is cooked on parilla grills over open wood fire. It’s the kind of grill you find in high-end Buenos Aires steakhouses, with very sturdy steel construction and the heat controlled by raising and lowering grates with wheels and chains.

All models have one or more oversized crank wheels, are completely made of heavy gauge stainless steel, and feature V-shaped grate bars for easy cleanup.

These grills are expensive, starting at $3,000 for an entry level model by Grillworks, which has been making them for 30 years.

OUTDOOR PIZZA OVEN
No outdoor kitchen would be complete without a Texas-sized, wood-fired oven for making pizzas, breads, barbecues and smoking foods.

You can build one yourself with no masonry skills required, for about $950.

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2. Offer valid on purchase of any new, qualifying 4110 Tractor-Loader-Backhoes made between May 1, 2016 and May 31, 2016. Savings up to $1,394. Prices and models may vary by dealer. Manufacturer suggested list price is $29,994. Select Tractors. Prices are suggested retail prices, any price is subject to change without notice at any time. Credit may be extended on the purchase of ZTrak™ lawn mower. Offer valid on new Z-Trak™ lawn mowers, made between May 1, 2016 and May 31, 2016. Prices and models may vary by dealer. Credit is subject to acceptance of the terms and conditions of the existing John Deere Financial credit agreement. The length of the loan may vary from 5 to 72 months. The successful applicant may be required to complete certain credit checks. The interest rate is designed to provide a lower monthly payment on a maximum loan amount of $15,000. Existing John Deere Financial customers will receive a 2% interest rate reduction on qualifying ZTrak™ lawn mowers. The 2% interest rate reduction is subject to change without notice at any time. Savings based on the purchase of eligible equipment. Offers available on new equipment and are subject to change without notice at any time. Customer may call for the best. Customer with optional equipment included in the price. Attachments and implements sold separately. Restrictions apply. Other special offers and terms may be available in your area. See your nearest dealer for details and school training options. Available at participating dealers.
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