Our Garden Center is OPEN!

McKay’s Do-it-Best Hardware
(248) 634-5301
15146 North Holly Rd., Holly
Open: Mon-Fri 8am-7pm • Sat 8am-6pm
Sun 10am-3pm

11” Geranium Baskets
BUY 2 and get a Suncatcher FREE! while supplies last!

10” Annual Baskets $8.99 each
Begonias, Impatiens, Petunias, Marigolds and More!

Check out our Vegetable & Herb selection!
-SEEDS ALSO AVAILABLE-
MUST MENTION THIS AD FOR SPECIAL PRICING
EXPIRES 5/31/2017

Starting at $195.00
*Undermount Sink Included

www.VicBondSupply.com

TANKLESS HEATERS
Starting at $699.99
Natural or LP Gas

WATER HEATER
40 Gal Nat. Gas
40,000 btu
6 yr Parts/Tank Warranty
$409.00

WATER SOFTENERS
Starting at $399.95
Reg. $689.95

ROUND FRONT TOILET IN A BOX
starts at $69.99
Includes Seat, wax ring & bolts

ST. THOMAS TOILET
• Comfort height
• Elongated
• White
$79.99

BRIGGS TOILET & PEDESTAL COMBO
33” x 22” x 8” Deep
$129.99

GRANITE TOPS
Starting at $195.00
*Undermount Sink Included

SUMP PUMPS
Starting at $69.99

COMING CHECK OUT OUR SHOWROOM
OF WORKING FAUCETS & SHOWERS!

Over 200 faucets on display!

Fenton
227 Industrial Way
Off Owen Rd. Between Vic Canever and Randy Wise
Store Hours
Monday-Friday: 7:00am-5:00pm
Saturday: 8:00am-2:00pm Sunday: Closed
810-629-8168

www.VicBondSupply.com

FURNACES
TANKLESS HEATERS
WATER HEATER
WATER SOFTENERS
FURNACE PARTS
Starting at $495.00
Starting at $699.99
12 Yr Warranty
• Humidifier Pads
• Air Cleaners
• Replacement Filters
Starting at $69.99
SUMP PUMPS
• Filters (All Sizes)
• Ignitors (For All Makes)
• Honeywell Replacement Parts
HUMIDIFIERS
Natural or LP Gas
40 Gal Nat. Gas
40,000 btu
6 yr Parts/Tank Warranty
$409.00
Starting at $399.95
Reg. $689.95

KITCHEN CABINETS
SOLID WOOD CONSTRUCTION
DOVE TAILED DRAWERS

IN STOCK

LAYOUT ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

PLUMBING
HEATING
ELECTRICAL
CABINETRY

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

MUST MENTION THIS AD FOR SPECIAL PRICING
EXPIRES 5/31/2017
Inspire your backyard with a new DECK DESIGN

You have more options to choose from than just a large square backyard deck

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

Decks are more than just a wooden structure attached to your home — they can be the center of your family’s summer meals and activities and the focal point of your entertaining. Today, there are so many options for decking, in both design and materials. Here are a few ideas that can get you started on your own deck.

Floating deck

Also called a free-standing deck, this type of deck is simply one that’s not attached to your home.

There are some building advantages, in that a floating deck doesn’t require frost-proof footings, so you don’t have to dig and install deep concrete footings. Instead, you can put your deck’s posts, girders and joists on precast pier blocks set directly in the ground. That will save lots of time, money and hard work.

You also won’t have to install a ledger, which connects the deck with your house, and you won’t have to cut away your house’s siding or install flashing.

Beyond that, a floating deck can do everything a regular deck can do: host gatherings and activities and the focal point of your entertaining. But because it’s not attached to your home, there are some added features you may want to consider.

Tired of being restricted to the flat space of your yard? A floating deck is a great way to break up the monotony of a yard or have a place for lounging and sunning. You may choose to tier your deck so that there are different levels for different purposes.

Tiered deck

If you have a terrain that slopes, a tiered deck will make a lot of sense. Some of the most imaginative decks have been the result of working with the terrain. Now, whatever it is to break up the monotony of a large flat space, or allow you to utilize different levels for different purposes.

Wraparound deck

If you have a panoramic view from your yard or want to make a classic architectural statement, a wraparound deck may be able to provide you with both.

You’ll want to consider the most defining patterns that work the best with the existing lines of the house. A well-designed wraparound deck could offer one spot for barbecuing, one spot for lounging and sunning and another for privacy — all with the turn of a corner. Even if you don’t have an existing deck, you can turn part of your yard into new walkways, planters for accessorizing and a retractable awning for shade.

Building your deck — Natural wood or composite?

The majority of decks built today are made of wood, because of the initial cost savings, according to Angieslist.com. The most popular wood products are treated lumber and cedar.

The main reason people choose composite materials, like PVC and vinyl, is for the low maintenance required. The initial installation for a composite deck will definitely be more than wood, but when adding up the cost of wood deck maintenance, the two prices are closer. If you’re going to hire someone for your wood deck maintenance, it will be worthwhile to factor in that cost before you make the decision.

To choose which material is best for your deck, ask yourself:

• How will the deck be used?
• Is your deck in a shaded area or sunny one?
• Do you plan to do your own deck maintenance or hire a professional?

Looking to Remodel? Update doors and trim? Add custom bookcases? Match existing Moulding?

You should come to Michigan Lumber for the largest selection of Hardwood, Plywood & Mouldings this side of Detroit.
Learning about available materials, uses, warranties for this indispensable tool

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

Whether you are watering your garden, filling your kiddie pool or washing your car, your garden hose is one of your most indispensable outdoor tools.

This is the time of year when you inspect all of your yard and garden equipment, to find out what’s still up to the tasks for the summer season.

If you’re looking for a new garden hose this year, here’s what to look for, according to television handyman Bob Vila:

• Material
Garden hoses are generally made of rubber, vinyl or polyurethane. Vinyl hoses are the least expensive, but have the shortest lifespan. Rubber hoses are more flexible and less susceptible to cuts and abrasions, but tend to be more expensive. Higher quality hoses boast greater longevity, because they feature a layer of reinforcement that lesser hoses don’t have.

• Thickness, diameter and length
Hoses are built of layers, with their strength increasing with each additional layer. Two-ply hoses are the weakest and six-ply hoses are the strongest. Thicker hoses tend to kink less, ensuring a consistent flow of water during use.

Hose diameters range in thickness from a half-inch to an inch, with residential-use hoses spanning five-eighths of an inch.

The most popular-length hoses measure between 50 and 100 feet, but you buy as short as 10 feet or as long as 250 feet. The longer the hose, the heavier it is and the more difficult it is to manage.

• Couplings
A hose connects to the water source with brass or plastic couplings, or fittings. Brass fittings are more resistant to weather and rust, but they can be difficult to tighten. Plastic is more prone to cracking and may not last as long.

• Maintain your hose
You can extend the life of your hose by treating it properly. Drain water out of your hose after each use to prevent buildup of mold or bacteria. Never run hot water through your hose and avoid leaving pressure in your hose, both of which could make your hose leak or burst.

If possible, store your hose in a shed, garage or basement to prolong its usefulness.

• Check warranty
Many quality hose brands come with some kind of warranty, including Craftsman traditional rubber hoses in 50- and 100-foot lengths, sold at
Your backyard can go from ordinary to extraordinary with these adventurous additions

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

What do all swimming pools have in common? Each one is a hole full of water in your backyard, but that’s where the similarities end.

From that point on, the custom features you build into your pool are up to you, and are a reflection of your own unique imagination and lifestyle. If you want to enjoy a pool that truly matches your family’s adventurous personality, now’s the time to start thinking about ways to incorporate cool pool ideas like these into your plan.

Here are three cool pool features from poolpricer.com, to whet your pool appetite this summer.

**Caves and grottos**

Resort-style features are what separate a typical residential pool from a luxury one, according to poolpricer.com. When it comes to adding a “wow” factor to your pool, grottos top the list. They are a cave you can swim into, usually within a rock or rock-like structure. This structure often comes with a built-in waterslide or waterfall, among other features.

With their naturalist look, grottos work well in a tropical pool design, making you feel like you just dove into your own secluded slice of paradise.

A pool grotto can be a humble little nook to escape the sun, or an elaborate structure housing a lounging area, colored LED lights, a bar, even a large-screen television.

Because there are so many amenities and features, pricing a grotto is all over the map, but expect to pay $10,000 and up to start.

**Climbing walls**

An aquatic climbing wall is the height of pool fitness.

A pool climbing wall attaches to the pool deck and typically extends up and at an angle, allowing climbers to plunge into the water when they let go. They make an interesting alternative to a traditional diving board.

While pool climbing walls aren’t an aesthetic addition to your pool, they offer an enticing form of exercise and a new reason for older children and teens to jump in. You will need to consider that your pool must have a deep end that permits people to safely drop into the pool without hitting the bottom. Your wallet also will feel the price tag of about $4,500 and up.

**Backyard lazy rivers**

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to float along a lazy river anytime, without the crowds of your nearest amusement park? A lazy river is basically a long, shallow swimming pool with a current generation system that keeps inner tubes floating along.

That’s just the beginning, though. A memorable lazy river sends floaters on a tour of stunning landscaping with a few adventurous twists, such as waterfalls and drop-offs. A footbridge over the lazy river would be an added bonus, as well as providing accessibility from different parts of your yard.

In addition to a large budget (at least $900,000 according to one estimate), you’ll also need a lot of space in your yard, to avoid going round and round in circles.
If severe weather is coming, retract the awnings to spare them from wind damage.

Cost: $500 to $2,700

Patio umbrella

Your patio area will get much more use if it’s protected from the harsh rays of the sun and hot temperatures. Some of these are free-standing structures with a heavy-weight metal base. Others are simply small umbrellas that fit into a patio table with a hole in the center. When it comes to patio umbrellas, as in many things in life, you get what you pay for. Cheap umbrellas are prone to failed lift mechanisms and may be easily damaged by wind.

Cost: $70 to $400

Shade sail

Shaped like a sail and stretched among poles or from a bracket on your roof, a shade sail offers more than just shade — it’s also an architectural design element. You can install one yourself, but keep in mind there is some concrete work involved to erect the poles.

Cost: $70 to $200 per sail, plus the cost of stainless steel hardware, concrete, poles and building materials

Pergolas and arbors

A pergola is a larger structure with four open walls and a flat or slightly curved lattice work roof, used to cover a patio, deck or walkway. They can be made of wood, vinyl or metal. Most pergolas are large enough to fit a set of patio furniture underneath.

Cost: $200 up to $1,000 for an arbor and $1,200 on up to $10,000 for a pergola, depending on size and materials.

Other possible creative shades include natural, tropical shades of a large banana tree, which can grow 2 feet per week in warm weather, eventually between 12 and 18 feet.
Backyard PLAY

1. Mini golf course
2. Playhouse
3. Playhouse under the deck
4. Chalkboard walls
5. Sand box/stage
6. See-saws
7. Outdoor movie screen
8. Backyard tent
9. Large outdoor fort
10. Summer reading nook

From mini-golf to forts, your yard is a summer playground just waiting for your family.

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

Turn off the videogames and get outdoors into your backyard, with these kid-friendly ideas for summertime fun. Whether you build these structures yourself or hire some professional help, you and your family will have hours of childhood fantasy and fun, and create memories for a lifetime.

BUILDING memories IN YOUR BACKYARD

Over 200 model designs to choose from

Main brands offered:
- Gorilla Playsets • PlayNation Play Systems
- Eastern Jungle Gym Swing Sets
- Swing Kingdom • Parts for do-it-yourselfers & more!

Our prices won’t be beat!
We will also beat the competition’s price for the same Brand and Model Design.

Two locations to serve you:

Kawkawlin, MI
1385 S. Huron Road (M-13)
(Same day pick up if in stock)
Mon. 9-7, Tues.-Fri. 9-5, Sat. 10-2

Bridgeport, MI
6100 Baron Drive
(Junction Rd. East of Dixie)

10-20 year warranty on the wood and 1 year on accessories

Wooden PlayScapes.com
Nation’s Premier Wooden Swing Set Dealer
866-665-0105
All Major Charge Cards, Cash, Checks, Lay-Away, Financing through PayPal

Delivery & Professional Installation Available
One of the best things about Mother’s Day, besides all the hugs, kisses and cards, are the gifts for the outdoors — flowers, plantings, bushes and more. The perennials, like rosebushes, are a big hit, as are the hanging baskets with flowers.

To keep plants in hanging baskets healthy and beautiful all summer long, follow these steps:

**Water often and thoroughly**

Plants in containers generally need to be watered more often than if they were growing in the ground. This is especially true for hanging baskets because they are subject to drying winds. Reach up and lift the pot from below; if it feels light, it probably needs water. Put your finger one inch into the soil; if it is dry at that depth, water. In most areas you should expect to water hanging plants every day, or even twice a day.

Water should stream from the drainage holes when you water.

**Deadhead blooming plants**

As flowers fade and die, remove them by pinching them off where they meet the stem. This promotes the formation of new flowers. Otherwise the plant may put its energy into creating seed.

In a mixed basket, replace plants as needed

Don’t be afraid to remove a plant from a mixed planting if it has finished blooming. Ease it out, being careful of the other plants, and replace it with something else. Alternatively, plug the space with more soil and allow the other plants to fill the gap.

**Fertilize**

Because you’ll be watering frequently, nutrients will leave the potting mix quickly. Feed the plants with a liquid fertilizer or a dry slow-release fertilizer (not both).

Follow the directions for amount and frequency. Feed when the soil is moist, and never when plants are wilting.

**If necessary, soak**

If water streams from the drainage holes but the soil still seems dry, try submerging the pot in a bucket of water for up to an hour. This will thoroughly rewet the soil.

**Cut back leggy plants**

If the plants start to look straggly, don’t be afraid to cut them back. Most common hanging plants, such as verbena, petunias and impatiens, will produce denser new growth.

---

 compiled by Vera Hogan
vhogan@tctimes.com; 810-433-6823

---

Source: hortmag.com
Here’s how to know if a riding mower, lawn tractor or garden tractor is the right choice for you

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

If your lawn is big enough to warrant a riding mower or tractor, you’ll want to make sure you’re choosing the right one for the job.

When shopping for a riding mower or tractor, the main question you’ll want to ask yourself is, “What will I be using the equipment for?”

You’ll also want to consider whether your terrain is hilly or level, and does it have many obstacles to work around, such as trees and flowerbeds?

Even though riding mowers, garden tractors and lawn tractors tend to look very similar, there are some basic differences that make them each suited for specific tasks.

Riding mowers are built for a specific purpose — cutting grass. A rear-engine riding mower with a smaller cutting deck and smaller overall size is ideal for suburban use and for yards smaller than an acre. Starting at about $800, they are easy to operate and may be able to tow a very small garden wagon, but that’s it. You won’t have the ability to hook up any other implements to it.

Lawn tractors, priced at about $1,200, are an excellent choice if your primary need is mowing, a lawn tractor will get the job done quickly, efficiently and affordable. They have better maneuverability around tight turns and obstacles.

But if you need a more powerful workhorse for your yard and garden, you’ll need the extra power and versatility of a garden tractor.

A garden tractor, priced between $2,000 and $7,000, tends to be larger than a lawn tractor, with larger and more powerful engines and transmissions. They are often used for more heavy-duty tasks, such as hauling material, tilling a garden and moving snow, in addition to mowing a lawn.

Because they are designed to handle heavy attachments, they also have larger rear drive wheels than lawn tractors. Because they weigh more, they are better at handling hilly terrain.

With their versatility, garden tractors require more horsepower, about 20 to 30 hp, compared to lawn tractors that have 15 to 25 hp. They also typically come with a locking differential, which helps the user provide traction in less than ideal situations.

You can use your lawn mower for so much more than just mowing

Depending on your equipment, you can buy accessories that will greatly enhance the workhorse capabilities of your mower.

For more total lawn care beyond mowing, you can buy accessories to bag, sweep, spread fertilizer, aerate the soil, de-thatch and roll your lawn.

If you’d like a more comfortable ride, you can add plush seat covers, arm rests, a canopy to protect you from the sun, and more.

When winter arrives, turn your tractor into a plow with blades, scoops and snow throwers.

How to sharpen your lawn mower blade
The professional, manicured look of your lawn depends on a sharp blade. Experts suggest you sharpen the blade twice each season to help maintain a green, healthy lawn. A sharp blade not only cuts blades clean so grass plants recover quickly, it also helps reduce your lawn mowing time.

You can do-it-yourself with easy instructions from familyhandyman.com, or visit your local hardware store or home center.
Choose from Kawasaki® FX801V, Briggs & Stratton® Commercial Series, Vanguard™ 810 EFI with Oil Guard System, or Vanguard™ BIG BLOCK™ EFI with Oil Guard Engine options.

- 61” or 72” iCD™ cutting deck options
- Cast-iron (61”) or Hercules II” (72”) mower spindles
- Dual commercial Hydro-Gear® ZT-5400 Powertrain® transaxles with 9” cooling fans

**NO MONTHLY INTEREST FOR 36 MONTHS!**

On Purchases of $2,000 or more with your Briggs & Stratton credit card made between 5/1/2017 and 5/31/2017. A $150 promotion fee will be charged. 36 Equal Monthly Payments Required.

Choose from Kawasaki® FX691V, Kawasaki® FS730V, Kawasak™ FS730V EFI or Briggs & Stratton® Commercial Series Engine options.

- Cast-aluminum mower spindles
- Dual commercial Hydro-Gear® ZT-3400® transaxles with 7” cooling fans

**S200 xt**

STARTING AS LOW AS $7,199

MODEL: 5901280

**S150 xt**

STARTING AS LOW AS $7,499

MODEL: 5901487

Choose from Kawasaki® FX600V or Briggs & Stratton® Commercial Series Engine options.

- Powerful Kawasaki® FX730V Engine
- 52” iCD™ cutting deck
- Cast-iron mower spindles

- Dual commercial Hydro-Gear® ZT-4400® transaxles with 8.3” cooling fans

**S125 xt**

STARTING AS LOW AS $5,999

MODEL: 5901630

**S50 xt**

STARTING AS LOW AS $4,399

MODEL: 5901610

Choose from Kawasaki® FX600V or Briggs & Stratton® Commercial Series Engine options.

- 36” fabricated or 48” iCD™ cutting deck options
- Cast-aluminum mower spindles
- Dual commercial Hydro-Gear® ZT-3100® transaxles with 7” cooling fans

www.sloanssalesandservice.com

Outdoor Power Equipment Sales • Small Engine Repair

1005 N. Bridge Street, Linden, Mi 48451 • (810) 458-4299

Mon. - Fri. 8am-7pm, Sat. 8am-4pm, Sun. 10:30am-3:30pm

*Offer applies only to single-receipt qualifying purchases. A promo fee will be charged and included in the promo purchase balance equal to $150. No monthly interest will be charged on promo purchase balance (including related promo fee) and equal monthly payments are required equal to 2.776% of initial promo purchase amount until promo is paid in full. The equal monthly payment will be rounded to the next highest whole dollar and may be higher than the minimum payment that would be required if the purchase was a non-promotional purchase. Regular account terms apply to non-promotional purchases. For new accounts: Purchase APR is 26.99%; Minimum Monthly Interest Charge is $5. Existing cardholders should see their credit card agreement for their applicable terms. Subject to credit approval.

† Tax, set-up, and delivery fees not included
Garden pathways add **SAFETY and CHARM**

Compiled By Vera Hogan
vhogan@tctimes.com; 810-433-6823

Garden paths not only mark the safe places in your garden to walk, they give your garden a sense of completeness, dimension, and charm. Garden paths come in many styles and it is up to you to determine not only which style fits your garden best, but which you can commit yourself to creating and maintaining.

Some take much more time, effort, and expense than others. For example, gravel and mulch paths are inexpensive, but stone and brick are more durable, according to tipsbulletin.com. Stepping stones add charm, while mosaics add elegance and beauty but are incredibly time consuming.

**Mulch**

Bark, wood chips and other types of organic mulch make soft paths that blend well with natural settings. Since these path materials are lighter than stone, they’re easier to haul and spread. Mulch is also a bit cheaper than gravel or stone pebbles. Organic paths decompose over time, however, so you’ll have to rejuvenate them every two to five years with new material.

You’ll find bags of mulch at home centers, but for the best selection of organic materials for a path, check your local nursery or landscape supplier.

Call the public works department at your city hall or check with local tree trimming services. They often have piles of wood chips or mulch that are free for the hauling.

**Gravel**

For a path that’s more formal or longer lasting than a mulch path, consider washed gravel, crushed stone or crushed shells. These materials last indefinitely and only need occasional weeding to look their best. If you want to run a wheelbarrow or lawn mower along the path, choose crushed stone rather than smooth pebbles. The jagged edges of crushed stone lock together to form a firm surface. Crushed stone is also less likely to get kicked out into the yard.

Visit your local nursery or landscape supply specialist to see what’s available in your area. Gravel is usually sold by the ton. Measure the length and width of the path. Take these measurements to the supplier and ask for help figuring out the quantity of gravel you need. Unless your path is very short, it usually makes sense to have the material delivered. Gravel paths do have a few limitations, though. The stones can get tracked into the house, so don’t use them near entries. And gravel paths are a bad choice in areas where you have to shovel snow off them. The gravel can end up in your lawn or flower beds.

**Borders and edging**

Gravel or mulch paths require edging to keep the material from spreading out onto your lawn or flower bed. You can also add a border or an edge as a design element.

**Stepping stones**

Stepping stones are the fastest, easiest way to build a path. There’s very little digging involved. And although the stone is heavy, a little goes a long way. Since there’s distance between the stones, you don’t have to worry about leveling them with one another.

Stepping-stone paths also cost less because you’ll cover more distance with less stone. Stones that are flat and about 18 inches across and 2 inches thick are ideal. Check your local landscape supplier or quarry to see what’s available. If you’re building a short stepping-stone path, you can usually pick the stones you want from the pallet or pile of stones on hand at the supplier.

For longer paths, ask for help figuring the quantity and have the stone delivered. You can also make attractive stepping-stone paths using 12-inch square or round concrete patio blocks. These are available in a wide selection of colors and textures from home centers, landscape suppliers and masonry dealers. Search online for “patio blocks” to see the variety.

For more information on landscaping pathways, visit familyhandyman.com or tipsbulletin.com.

Sources: familyhandyman.com; tipsbulletin.com

---

**ON THE HOME OR POLE - LET IT FLY**

**$5 OFF**

Any flag purchase
use promo code 5OFFANY

---

**RESIDENTIAL /COMMERCIAL FLAGS & FLAGPOLES**

American Flags
State Flags
Military Flags
Sports Flags

**FREE SHIPPING ★ MADE IN THE USA ★ MONEY BACK GUARANTEE ★**

407 Hadley St. • Downtown Holly
888-735-5591 • 248-634-7183 • 810-629-2658

www.flagpolesetc.com
You can create fun, functional lighting with LEDs and your own imagination

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

Most of your summer entertaining is done in the evening, right? Then why not set the mood for your family and guests with outdoor lighting that adds fun and safety to your outdoor life.

Your summer lighting might include fixtures, up lights to accent trees and shrubs or architectural features of your home, pathway lighting, recessed lighting for your dock, deck and patio, plus fun string party lights for a bit of whimsy on your deck or patio.

Your lighting plan may even include cute table candles, tiki torches and other fun, inexpensive touches that will create mood, while lighting areas that need illumination.

Your overall outdoor lighting will also eliminate dark areas that might hide an intruder, exposing any movement on your property.

LED lights
You can use waterproof LED recessed down lights to create a mood, yet add safety to your hot tub party, or install them on your deck, dock and patio.

The main focal point of your lighting will be warm, waterproof LED lights that are dimmable, easy to install and long lasting. They are still twice as expensive as incandescent bulbs, but with the longevity of at least 40,000 hours or about 18 years of nighttime service, they are worth the additional upfront cost, according to most experts.

Today’s LED lights are also much warmer than their “blue light” predecessors, with many more applications for a natural look that creates beautiful shadows and intense highlights.

Landscape lighting
1) Highlight trees
Whether illuminated from below or from a light mounted in the tree itself, trees make a stunning feature.

2) Use uplights
Uplighting is dramatic because we expect light to shine downward. Used in moderation, it’s an effective way to showcase landscaping and architectural features.

3) Focus on your entryway
Your porch or front entrance plays center stage to your home’s exterior. Your goal is to cast a wide pool of light to illuminate the entry, banish dark corners and create a warm, inviting glow. To do this, you can choose a wall-mount, ceiling-mount or combination of the two in a very large entryway.

4) Use warm light rather than colors
Unless you’re illuminating a party area like a pool, you’ll want to stick with a warm light to showcase your house and landscape, rather than create a light show.

5) Orchestrate your lighting
A timer, synched with your electronics, can bring your lighting to life as the sun sets, then at midnight, shut everything down but security lighting.

Party lights and candles
Fill shells with tea lights and place around your table for an instant beach vibe. To make a larger statement, find larger shells and place on a tray with sand, filling the openings with tea lights. Use empty soup cans and puncture them in different patterns. To avoid denting the cans in the process, fill with water and freeze. Paint the cans and fill with a votive candle.

Make origami shapes out of white paper, fill with an LED light and hang over a table or around a deck.
Protect your GENERATOR during spring storms

Your portable generator needs to be shielded from the elements and safely kept away from your house.

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

It’s ironic that the rain and inclement weather that causes your power to go out in the first place is also an issue for the generator that you’re using outdoors to solve your problem.

With spring storms already heading our way, it’s more important than ever to understand the safety of using your generator outdoors. You want to protect the equipment from rain, snow and water penetration, which could cause engine failure. You also want to prevent rust, corrosion and dust buildup.

However, you need to be very careful about where you locate your generator — it should never be used in an enclosed or partially enclosed space. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly, according to Consumer Reports. Remember, you can’t smell or see carbon monoxide.

Never use a generator in any indoor space, including your home, garage, basement, crawl space or other partially enclosed area. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide from building up in the home. You must locate your generator outdoors and away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide in.

There are many generator enclosure options that you can buy or do-it-yourself. If you’re looking for generator storage, the designs you’ll find typically include the size and brand/model of the generator that it is compatible with. Others are universal, and will fit almost any style generator.

Generator enclosures may come in the form of a shed designed specifically for this purpose, a cover, a box, a canopy of various materials and designs. Here are five top storage options that may work with your particular generator.

• GenTent Wet Weather Safety Canopy
  Regardless of the brand/model of your portable generator, this canopy is an effective shield from snow, sleet, ice or rain. Made from Marine-grade waterproof material, it’s a universal fit for generators from 3,500-watt to 10,000-watt output.
  Its design includes a vent for proper cooling airflow to prevent overheating, plus protection skirts that protect the electrical outlet from getting wet.
  Installation is easy because it comes with a universal clamping system that fits on a large number of generators.
  Cost: $165

• Classic Accessories 79547 Generator Cover
  Available in three sizes, this cover caters to different sizes of generators to protect them from dust, birds, snow debris, sun damage and rain during storage or operation. Made from durable fabric with water-resistant and repellant coating, it won’t shrink or stretch and comes with elastic-shock string in the base edge, with easy and quick slip-on and removal. Its different sizes will accommodate generators from 3,000-watt output up to 15,000-watt.
  Cost: $18

• Backyard Basics Generator Cover
  This cover fits generators measuring up to 34 inches long by 24 inches wide and 30 inches high. Made from dual layer PVC-free material, it provides a soft but durable inner layer and weather resistant outer layer, to protect against rain, dirt, sun and dust.
  Cost: $16

• Westinghouse Universal Generator Cover
  This cover accommodates portable generators with up to 7,500-watt output. It is lightweight and made from study 210 polyester synthetic fabric reinforced with tough stitching.
  Cost: $25

How to reduce the noise of your generator:
• Locate it far enough away from your house, but not too close to neighbors.
• Buy a padded cushion made out of cushioning wrap as well as poly foam. Place your portable generator on top of the padded cushion to reduce the noise level and vibrations.
• Connect the generator’s exhaust pipe to a 5-gallon tank filled with water. The water inside the tank will muffle the noise, making it sound like an aquarium’s air radiator.
• Check to be sure the generator is level. Portable generators have leveling “feet” on the bottom. If your generator doesn’t have these, you can slip Styrofoam corners on the edges to balance and level it.
• Insulate the area around the generator using sound-absorbing foam. You can also encompass the generator with a flame-retardant cloth. Never use material such as fabric, cloth or soft plastic, which can easily go up in flames.

For more information on generators, use the Consumer Reports Generator Buying Guide.


**GARDEN HOSE**
Continued from Page 4

Sears Hometown Store in Fenton. This Craftsman product doesn’t kink and has sturdy brass fittings. “Our Craftsman rubber hose is sturdy and long-lasting and comes with a limited lifetime guarantee,” said Sears Hometown Store owner Jeff Stone.

What about the new expandable “crinkle” hoses?

These new modern hoses have moved from “As Seen on TV” infomercials to the mainstream of shelf space in most hardware stores and discount centers. In tests done by Consumer Reports, three different brands, the Pocket Hose, FlexAble Hose and DAP XHose all lived up to their TV infomercial promises — in kinking, twisting, slicing and freezing tests. Where they came up short was in more rugged outdoor applications, including sprinklers, and in their longevity. However, the expandable hose market has stepped up its game recently by using strong brass fittings, layered latex cores and durable woven coverings. They still aren’t considered as long lasting as a rubber hose and shouldn’t be stored in the sun. However, they are now a viable option for homeowners shopping for a lightweight and tangle-free hose.

How to water your garden more efficiently

- If you’re not using soaker hoses in your garden, this can be your first outdoor project of the season.
- A system of drip irrigation will take all the hard work out of gardening, eliminating the need to drag around hoses and sprinklers. You place your soaker hoses once, and they’ll remain there throughout the garden season.
- While you might have more upfront expenses with a soaker hose and fittings at the beginning, studies show that well-designed drip irrigation systems will save you money — using 30 to 50 percent less water than other methods of watering.

A drip irrigation system can be as simple as a soaker hose or two snaked through your garden, or as complex as a network of tubes and other hardware. Either way, it delivers water directly to the root zone of a plant, where it seeps slowly into the soil one drop at a time, dripping at just the rate that soil can absorb and hold moisture. This slow, steady drip ensures that almost no water is lost to surface runoff or evaporation. Also, very few nutrients leach down beyond the reach of plant roots. Furthermore, since soaker hoses deliver water directly to the plants you want to grow, less is wasted on weeds. The soil surface between the plants also remains drier, which discourages weed seeds from sprouting.

Plants watered with soaker hoses grow more quickly and are more productive, because they have all the water they need and their growth isn’t slowed by water stress. This is especially true when drip irrigation is used in conjunction with mulch. Also, plants watered by drip irrigation don’t end up with wet foliage from the sprinkler, resulting in plant diseases like powdery mildew.

To make drip irrigation for houseplants:
- Drill a 1/8-inch diameter hole in the lid of a plastic water bottle.
- Fill the bottle with water.
- Screw the lid tightly on the bottle.
- Dig a small hole in the soil of the houseplant.
- Insert the water bottle upside down in the hole.
- The water will slowly leak out over time, keeping the plant well irrigated while you’re away from home on vacation.

Source: Todayshomeowners.com

**GARDENING POINTERS**

People have many reasons for growing gardens, and some of the most popular gardens are plots designated for cultivating herbs and vegetables. Fresh produce at the ready is a great benefit of having a home garden, which also allows homeowners to exercise full control over which products to use to grow robust, healthy vegetables.

Novice gardeners may not know where to begin when it comes to planting their first vegetable garden. You may want to begin by growing plants in containers so they are more manageable and can be moved as you discover which areas of your property provide the best growing conditions.

Begin with one or two types of vegetables. Tomatoes, cucumbers, and certain squashes are popular starter plants, as they are relatively hardy.

Some gardeners prefer to start plants from seeds, but this will require more time and a greater commitment with regard to maintenance and planting. When just starting out, experiment with small plants that are established and already have a good root system.

*For more tips, “Our Craftsman gardening center for more suggestions such as which soil amendments to use. Plants may require a certain soil pH that can be adjusted for optimal plant growth.*

**RAPTOR**

THE WORLD’S ONLY
HIGH-PERFORMANCE ZERO-TURN
WITH QUICKFLIP™ TECHNOLOGY

FOR 48 MONTHS*

OFFER AVAILABLE THROUGH 6/30/17

*Restrictions apply. See dealer for details.

NOW

$500 OFF

48” - $4,799

54” - $4,999

• Exclusive SmoothTrak™ steering
• Automated deck height adjustment
• Push button deck to raise and lower for easy blade access
• SmartChoke™ technology – turn the key and go
• 20” drive tires

**Flint New Holland, Inc.**
3266 East Bristol Road • Burton, MI 48529
www.flintnewhollandinc.com
(810) 744-2030
**$500 OFF¹** AND **0% FOR 60 MONTHS³**

**X739 SIGNATURE SERIES TRACTOR**
- 25.5 hp* (19 kW), 745 cc
- 48-in. (122-cm) Accel Deep™ Deck/
  54-in. (137-cm) or 60-in. (152-cm)
  High-capacity deck
- 4-wheel steering, full-time
  4-wheel drive
- 4-year/700-hour bumper-to-
  bumper warranty**

**1025R**
- Available in 23 and 25 horsepower
- Quik-Park™ Loader and AutoConnect™
  Drive-over Deck compatible
- Premium operator station with ergonomic
  seat, armrests and fender lights
- **0% FOR 60 MONTHS²**

---

**TACKLE BIG JOBS WITH BIG SAVINGS.**

**XUV825i S4**
- 50 hp* (37 kW)
- 44 mph (72 km/h)
- Standard power steering
- Class-leading cargo capacity
- 4-passenger
- **$500 OFF¹ AND 0% FOR 48 MONTHS⁴**

---

**1025R**
- Available in 23 and 25 horsepower
- Quik-Park™ Loader and AutoConnect™
  Drive-over Deck compatible
- Premium operator station with ergonomic
  seat, armrests and fender lights
- **0% FOR 60 MONTHS²**

---

**TRI COUNTY EQUIPMENT**

**John Deere**

---

**Need service on your mower? Call today to make an appointment!**

Visit us at tricountyequipment.net