are practically endless, but what you choose for your patio, pool deck or walkways will have to stand up to years of backyard fun and games.

If you’re considering the addition of a patio to your backyard, you’ll have many choices of materials to use. You’ll also have choices to make about the size, shape, color or pattern you envision for your outdoor space. Foundation — the beauty of your outdoor space will begin with a strong foundation. Experts suggest about six to eight inches of base, either sand or stone.

Choose a building material to fit your lifestyle and budget.

**Natural stone**
Natural stone creates a beautiful floor with its color variations, ability to form patterns, and more. It’s also extremely durable and almost maintenance-free. However, it’s very expensive and installation is labor intensive.
Cost: $25 to $35 per square foot

**Outdoor tiles**
Many of the gorgeous stone patios you look at aren’t really stone at all. They are porcelain exterior tiles which are often more durable than natural stone. Tile is easy to clean and maintain, but it can be damaged in extremely cold conditions. Tile can also be slippery.
Cost: $12 to $20 per square foot

**Poured concrete slabs**
This is a popular patio material because of its affordability and ease of installation. However, it will crack at some point, resulting in costly repairs or replacement.
Cost: About $6 to $12 per square foot

**Stamped concrete**
Endless varieties of stamp patterns and colors mimic other materials such as slate, flagstone or brick for a fraction of the cost. Because it is concrete, it will crack at some point, and a sealer needs to be applied every two to three years to maintain the surface.
Cost: About $12 to $16 per square foot

**Paving stones**
Pavers can add character and charm to your outdoor living project. They’re available in a vast array of colors, shapes and textures. They won’t crack and can easily be added onto in the future. They aren’t slippery, so they are a good surface around pools and young children. They may settle and move over time, and weeds can grow between pavers unless polymeric sand is used to prevent their growth.
Cost: About $16 to $24 per square foot

**Brick**
Brick provides an elegant old-world look with a variety of pattern options, including basket weave, herringbone and circular. It is also low maintenance and relatively slip-resistant. However, ground shifts over time can result in an irregular surface, especially for shoveling snow.
Cost: $15 per square foot, including the base

**Wood**
Wood decking is one of the simplest DIY projects, which substantially lowers the cost, but wood requires cleaning and sealing every one to two years.
Cost: $8 to $10 per square foot for treated lumber; $18 to $20 for higher end wood; composite decking $35 per square foot

Sources: Diynetwork.com, Bobvila.com, Todayshomeowner.com
Flowing water fountains offer soothing allure to your outdoor living space

By Sally Rummel

Outdoor fountains are a relaxing addition to any backyard sanctuary. The soothing sounds of flowing water will bring peace and tranquility to your outdoor environment, and the fountain itself will add instant beauty to your surroundings.

Your fountain can be as simple as a tabletop or as elaborate as a giant wall fountain that serves as a piece of art and becomes a focal point of your home. When choosing a fountain, make sure that it fits with your outdoor decor.

Here are a few ideas of outdoor fountains in different styles:

**Tabletop fountain**
These provide a simple twist on a traditional outdoor fountain, and can easily fit any budget or space. You can make your own with just a pot and spout for water to trickle from. Add interest by floating flowers in the basin that move as the water gently flows in the pot.

Go to countryliving.com and search “DIY Fountains” to find these and many more DIY Fountain ideas.
GOTTA HAVE IT

Here are some backyard summer playthings that you and your family will love

By Sally Rummel

Your backyard is your summer oasis, so why not splurge on a few “gotta have” items that will give your outdoor play space a “wow” factor.

Here are some of the 30 “ultracool” backyard playthings from Trendsandideas.com:

1. ... 30.

GATHER ‘ROUND

It’s a Michigan tradition, whether you’re camping, sitting around a bonfire or going “up north”

By Sally Rummel

Michigan offers unique summer traditions that keep us in memories throughout our long, cold winters (what other state is shaped like a winter mitten, right?). Here are a few that we Michiganders are all looking forward to this summer:

Going “up north”

Where your “up north” begins and ends is as individual as the sands on a Michigan beach. For some people, “up north” means Bay City and beyond, traveling north on I-75. For others, it’s northwest toward Traverse City and for others, it’s across the Mackinac Bridge. Maybe your destination is a family cottage, or maybe it’s a campground.

Whatever and wherever it is, it’s your own special “up north” experience. Just remember to get as early a start on Friday afternoon as you can, and plan on lots of traffic (and orange barrels) on your way home.

Camping

You’re not really living unless you camp at least once during a Michigan summer. With beautiful camping sites throughout the state, there are many options for exploring the great outdoors. Michigan boasts 103 state park and recreation areas, plus a number of private campgrounds.

Bonfires

With camping comes bonfires, and no summer night would be complete without sitting across a campfire and making s’mores with some of your favorite people.

See GATHER on 11
30 “ULTRA COOL” BACKYARD PLAYTHINGS

Continued from previous page

1. Pool beanbag chairs
2. Convertible picnic table
3. Zip line kit
4. Convertible table with fold-down seats
5. Reading “on your tummy” chair
6. DIY bed loungers
7. Floating ping-pong table
8. In-ground trampoline
9. Inflatable backyard movie screen
10. Ultra-comfortable chair swing
11. Walk-in aviary (bird enclosure)
12. Beanbag hammock swing
13. Hideaway loveseat
14. Tree house trampoline
15. Backyard stream
16. Gazebo
17. Hanging tree tents
18. Circling bench swings
19. Geometric sprinkler
20. Pool bumper cars
21. DIY mini glass-enclosed fire
22. Icebox tables
23. Classy tent
24. Inflatable Twister game (make from an air mattress)
25. Rocking bench
26. Shower arch
27. Bed hammock
28. Pool shower
29. Covered loveseat with footrests and drink holders
30. Hammock trio

Source: Trendsandideas.com

SECRETS TO A PRIZE-WINNING LAWN

By Sally Rummel

A lush, green lawn is the envy of most homeowners. Here are a few suggestions from TV home expert Bob Vila who shares secrets of a healthy lawn without too much work.

Tip 1 — Start with the right seed. Many Michigan lawns start with Kentucky bluegrass because it grows well in cool weather and maintains its growth during hot summers.

Tip 2 — Consider sod. It will be expensive to buy and install, but you’ll be able to enjoy your lawn immediately. It will also be less likely to endure weeds and lawn disease.

Tip 3 — Fertilize properly. Cool-season grasses, including Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue benefit most from fall fertilizing. Start with a soil test to determine what nutrients may be required, and then follow those guidelines to give your lawn a boost.

Tip 4 — Get a jump on weeds. If dandelions are your nemesis, spray them directly with diluted vinegar, an organic alternative to weed killer. If it’s crabgrass, raise your mower blade higher and water less frequently.

Tip 5 — Water smart and early. Consider early in the morning when the air is cooler and winds are calmer, resulting in less evaporation.

Tip 6 — Go for a clean cut. There’s an art to it. Aim to take off no more than one-third of a blade’s height at once. This leaves enough leaf tissue so the plant can continue photosynthesis, the process in which green plants use sunlight to make their own food. Start the season with a sharp blade for the cleanest cut.

See LAWN on 13
**FROM GARDEN TO GRILL OR TABLE**

Homegrown and delicious — here’s what to plant for garden-fresh salads and ‘sides’

By Sally Rummel

Nothing tastes better than fresh produce grown right in your own backyard. You can round out a mouth-watering grilled summer meal with juicy tomatoes, leafy, tender lettuces, flavoring herbs and even use your “zucchini overload” in moist, delectable desserts.

**What to plant**

- **Tomatoes** — This juicy, red fruit (botanically, it’s a fruit, but nutritionally, it’s a vegetable) is the most popular summer produce to grow.
  
  Choose the right beef-steak variety for a short-growing season, or stick to a cherry or grape tomato.
  
  Plant in full sun in well-drained soil. Short on space? Grow in a well-drained container that’s at least 12 inches wide and deep.

- **Lettuce gardens** — Lettuce is easy to grow, making it a great choice for container gardening. This mix of greens tastes great in a salad or on a sandwich. Lettuce thrives in cooler weather, so plant it in the spring and fall, sowing every few weeks for a continuous harvest.

- **Salad table** — This is a portable, waist-high table just deep enough to grow salad greens, herbs and other shallow-rooted plants and vegetables. The shallow wooden box frame has a large surface area and a mesh bottom that allows water to drain. You can attach legs to the box or set it on sawhorses.

- **Juice garden** — grow nutrition in a glass by planting different vegetable and fruit varieties, such as:

  Leafy greens like spinach, Swiss chard, kale, collards

  Root veggies like carrots, sweet potatoes, beets, rutabagas, parsnips and kohlrabi

  Sweet fruits like apples and pears, blueberries, strawberries and blackberries as well as watermelon and cantaloupe

  “Watery stuff” like tomatoes, cucumbers and celery

  **Microgreens and more**, like arugula, cilantro, sprouts, wheatgrass.

- **Radishes**

  Why we love them: These spicy, crunchy globes are packed with flavor.

**SIDES DISHES/SALADS**

**Potluck Potato Salad**

recipe courtesy of *The Pioneer Woman*

**Ingredients:**

- 2/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1/3 cup sliced scallions
- 2/3 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, plus more for cooking potatoes
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 pounds red potatoes, washed

**Instructions:**

In a large bowl, whisk mayonnaise, olive oil, Dijon mustard, garlic, scallions, celery, salt, and pepper. Set aside.

Cut potatoes in half down the length of the potato, and then lay each potato flat side down onto the cutting board. Cut into ¼ inch slices.

Place the potato slices in a pot and cover with an inch of cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer and cook the potatoes for about 5 minutes, until fork tender.

Drain the potatoes, then immediately toss into the dressing. It’s now ready to be served, either warm or chilled.

**THE TASTE OF SUMMER**

Here are some favorite recipes from your garden

By Sally Rummel

Your best reward for watering and weeding your garden comes when you can enjoy meals from what you’ve planted.

Here are a few sides, salads and desserts to whet your appetite for summer.
Michigan’s natural bounty of rocks and boulders will add beauty and texture to your outdoor landscape

By Sally Rummel

Rocks are everywhere in Michigan, thanks to a history of glaciers, melting ice and erosion forming layers upon layers of materials into rocks, stones and boulders of all sizes.

Basically, these names all point to the same thing and are only differentiated by size. Stone is generally used for large amounts, boulders are pieces of rock bigger than a foot across and pebbles are smaller than 2.5 inches, according to the Wentworth scale of geologic measurement.

Today, these beautiful natural materials are the focal point of many residential landscapes.

Stone mulch

Stones are more expensive than mulch, but they are more durable and can last a lifetime in your garden. Pale colored stones can also provide a striking contrast to your deep-green foliage and help brighten shady corners of your landscape.

Plant a rock garden

Add a more exotic look to your landscape with a rock garden. Choose an area with plenty of sun and install two or more small boulders. Surround the boulders with closely spaced low-lying flowers, such as ground orchids or decorative cactus. Fill in the gaps with smaller stones.

Create a centerpiece

An unusually shaped border can serve as an eye-catching focal point, adding visual interest to a monotonous area such as hedges.

Build a pond border

Large rocks will give your backyard pond a fairytale look. The right stone will also help camouflage unsightly black pond liners and provide contrast to the dark pond water. Choose rocks that are similar in size but irregular in shape and color.

Make a stepping stone path

This is a picturesque option for shady areas where there is too little sun for most plants to grow. For a manicured look, surround large steppingstones with small pebbles in a contrasting color.

Build a patio, seating area or retaining wall

Use flagstone, also called patio rock, for projects that require thin, flat stones. These come from the splitting layers of sedimentary stone over time.

Source: HGTV.com

View stories at myfenton.com
All you really need is soil, sun and water

By Sally Rummel

You don’t need a lot of space to grow your own fresh vegetables, herbs and produce. You don’t really even need a garden. A sturdy pot will do, as long as you have dirt, water and sun.

Here are the three things you must have for any size garden.

**SUN**: Vegetables need a good six or more hours of sun each day. Otherwise, grow vegetables that can survive in light shade, such as lettuce and other greens, broccoli and cole crops (plants that belong to the mustard “brassica” family such as kale, cabbage, etc.).

**WATER**: Vegetables require regular watering. A drip irrigation system is a plus, but you can even do with a simple soaker hose. Locate your vegetable garden near a water spigot for easy access.

**SOIL**: Vegetables need soil rich in organic matter. A vegetable’s taste is affected by the quality of the soil.

Now, think small

- Look for any plant varieties with the words “patio — pixie — tiny — baby — dwarf” in the name, which means a plant is bred to be small.
- Mix flowers and veggies if you’re truly short of space. Vegetables can be ornamental in their own right and flowers will bring pollinators to the vegetables.
- Look for vining crops that can be trained upward on supports. Think pole beans rather than bush beans, and vining cucumbers and squash.
- Use succession planting as a small space technique. Re-seed quick-growing crops every two to three weeks.

Simple ways to water while you’re away

- **Find a neighbor/plant-savvy friend** who can come over a couple of times a week, then you can return the favor. Group plants with similar watering needs together on a waterproof floor and out of direct sun.
- **Make a mini greenhouse** with a plastic bag set over the plants. For details, go to goodhousekeeping.com and search for “how to water plants while away.”
- **Set up a wicking system** with an absorbent wicking material (thick yarn, roping, cotton T-shirt strips), plus containers to hold water. Set a container of water next to the plant, place one end of the wick into the water, making sure it reaches the bottom of the other container. Pole the other end about 3 inches deep into the plant’s moist soil. As the soil dries out, water will travel up the wick to replenish the moisture.
- **Try a wine bottle**. Simply screw a wine bottle filled with water to the stake, i.e., Plant Nanny Wine Bottle Stakes. Then insert the stake into your potted plant. The water will release slowly and steadily while you’re away. You may need two stakes per plant.
- **Invest in a slow drip system**. These are easy to assemble and will save you time when you are home.

See THINK SMALL on 15
And radishes are more versatile than you may think: add them to a salad or temper their heat by cooking them in your favorite veggie stir-fry.

What you get: Bonus! One radish has just 1 calorie.

In your garden: Even if you don’t have a green thumb, radishes are easy to grow in containers and gardens; spring radish varieties are often ready in just three weeks and are more mild in flavor—hotter summer soil produces spicier radishes.

### Fresh Herbs

**Basil** — Why we love it: No other herb epitomizes the taste of summer like basil. Whirl up a batch of pesto or sprinkle basil on your favorite pasta dish.

**In your garden:** Plant basil in rich, moist soil where it can enjoy full sun. Sow your basil every few weeks for continual harvest.

**Dill** — Why we love it: With both the leaves and seeds used for seasoning, dill is a very versatile herb. The leaves are soft and sweet, whereas the seeds have a sweet and citrusy taste that is slightly bitter.

**Sources:** Thespruce.com, HGTVC.com, Apartmenttherapy.com, Gardeners.com, Goodhousekeeping.com
By Sally Rummel

Do you know that one out of every three bites of your food depends on a pollinator? That’s because about 150 crops grown in the U.S. depend on these “busy bees” or other animal pollinators — including apples, almonds, blueberries, citrus, melons, pears, plums, pumpkins and squash.

Although some plants can pollinate themselves, most require the help of insects, birds, bats and other pollinators.

Whether your garden is large or small, or even just an outdoor patio planter, you can attract and support pollinators that will allow plants to make fruit or seeds to produce offspring for the next generation.

Bees are workhorse pollinators and many are in serious decline. Here’s how you can help by attracting bees to your garden:

• Create diverse plantings — include a variety of plants that bloom from early spring through late fall. Choose plants of various heights, including flowering trees and shrubs and those with a range of flower shapes and sizes.

• Plant wildflowers and native species.
**SERENITY**
Continued from Page 3

Three-tiered fountain
With a tiered fountain, water softly flows downward, making a soothing sound while making a focal point in your outdoor living space.

Asian influence
A Japanese-style concrete fountain blends in beautifully with a stone-lined pond. The sheet of water that spills over the edge catches the sunlight while adding the soothing sound of running water. Supported by a central pedestal, water erupts from the center of the stone and spills into the shallow pond below.

Meditation garden
A tall glazed oval pot is a perfect addition to a meditation garden, and the soothing sound of flowing water creates a tranquil allure.

Victorian appeal
Statues can provide the ideal base for your outdoor fountain, using weathered statuary with a flowing water feature. Add character to the landscape by surrounding the fountain with blooming plants and lush greenery.

Concrete fountain
Fountains made from concrete can easily withstand the elements while providing a minimalist, contemporary look.

Wall fountain
When space is limited in your landscape, wall fountains are an ideal solution. A simple fountain adds the soothing allure of running water that wall art could not provide. Surround the fountain with ivy and budding plants to make your wall fountain the focal point of the wall.

Simple fountain
Even a lowly, rustic bucket can provide a perfect basin for streams of water flowing into it. Surround it with greenery to soften the lines and meld your simple fountain into the landscape.

*Source: Bhg.com*

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**GATHER**
Continued from Page 4

Catching fireflies
Some of your best childhood memories probably include catching fireflies in a jar and watching them flicker their special lights throughout the night. Do you call them fireflies or lightning bugs?

Beaches and boating
With four of the Great Lakes in Michigan and 11,000 inland lakes, summers in our state include plenty of beaches and boating, plus tubing, waterskiing, wake surfing, stand-up paddleboarding and more.

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**Chocolate Zucchini Cake**  
*recipe courtesy of Mybakingaddiction.com*

**Ingredients:**
- For the Cake
  - 1/2 cup unsalted butter
  - 1/2 cup vegetable oil
  - 1 3/4 cups granulated sugar
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla
  - 1 teaspoon baking soda
  - 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
  - 1/2 teaspoon salt
  - 2 large eggs
  - 1/2 cup sour cream
  - 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
  - 3/4 cup Dutch-process cocoa
  - 2 1/2 cups shredded zucchini
  - 2/3 cup chocolate chips

  **For the Chocolate Ganache**
  - 3/4 cup heavy cream
  - 10 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips

**Instructions:**

**For the Cake**
- Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.
- Lightly grease a 9 x 13-inch pan.
- In a large mixing bowl, cream together the butter, oil, sugar, vanilla, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.
- Add in the eggs. Stir in the sour cream alternately with the flour. Then add the cocoa powder and mix until incorporated and the batter is smooth.
- Fold in the zucchini and chocolate chips.
- Add the batter into the prepared pan and bake the cake for 30 to 35 minutes, until the top springs back lightly when touched. Place pan on a wire rack to cool completely.

**For the Chocolate Ganache**
- To prepare the frosting, heat the heavy cream in a saucepan over medium heat until simmering.
- Remove from the cream from the heat and pour it over the chocolate chips. Wait about 3-4 minutes then whisk to combine. The ganache will thicken as it cools.
- Allow the ganache too cool until just slightly warm and still pourable. Pour the ganache over the cake and smooth with offset spatula. Allow frosting to set for about 30 minutes before serving.

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**Kiwi-Strawberry Spinach Salad**  
*recipe courtesy of Taste of Home*

**Ingredients:**
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup raspberry vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds
- 12 cups torn fresh spinach (about 9 ounces)
- 2 pints fresh strawberries, halved
- 4 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced

**Instructions:**

- Place the first five ingredients in a blender; cover and process 30 seconds or until blended. Transfer to a bowl; stir in green onions, sesame seeds and poppy seeds.
- In a large bowl, combine spinach, strawberries and kiwi. Drizzle with dressing; toss to coat.

---

**Peach and Tomato Caprese Salad**  
*recipe courtesy of Allrecipes.com*

**Ingredients:**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon flake salt, divided
- 2 large heirloom tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 2 ripe peaches — halved, pitted, and sliced into half moons
- 6 leaves fresh basil
- 1 (8 ounce) ball fresh mozzarella, thinly sliced

**Instructions:**

- Whisk olive oil, balsamic vinegar, and 1 pinch flaked salt together in a bowl until dressing is smooth.
- Alternate tomato slices, peach slices, basil leaves, and mozzarella slices in layers on a platter. Drizzle dressing over salad and sprinkle remaining flaked salt on top.

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**How to attract hummingbirds and other pollinators like bees and butterflies:**

- **Provide shelter** — they need shelter to hide from predators, get out of the elements and rear their young.
- **Provide artificial nesting boxes** with proper-sized holes drilling into them will attract mason bees.
- **Bat houses** will attract bats to your garden, giving them a safe place to raise their young.
- **Add special feeders** to attract hummingbirds and butterflies.
- **Bees, birds and butterflies** all need water. Consider adding a birdbath, water garden or a catch basin for rain. Butterflies are also attracted to muddy puddles, where they get salt and nutrients as well as water.

*Sources: Gardens.com, Sunset.com*
MEAT SMOKERS
Continued from Page 8
• How much capacity do you need?
• Do you plan to do large scale commercial cooking?
• Do you prefer gas, charcoal, wood or pellets?
• Will you likely upgrade in the future?
• Do you plan to do any cold smoking in addition to hot smoking?
• What’s the difference between smoking and grilling?

Grills and smokers use different temperatures to cook foods. Whether you’re using a charcoal or gas grill, the internal temperature can be very hot — as high as 400 degrees or more in some cases. This is because grills use direct heat to cook foods, whereas smokers use indirect heat. The direct heat cooks food quickly, while the indirect heat of a smoker cooks slowly.

The internal temperature of a smoker will range anywhere between 160 and 300 degrees F. Lower temperatures are better suited for fish, cheese and vegetables, whereas most meats are smoked at about 200-220 degrees.

Popular foods to smoke
• Whole hens
• Chicken quarters
• Pork shoulder or Boston butt
• Pork ribs
• Beef brisket
• Prime rib
• Lamb shoulder

LAWN
Continued from Page 5

Tip 7 — Choose the right mower.
Consider your needs and the needs of your lawn. Is your yard big or small, filled with obstacles or smooth? Weigh the options before deciding on a manual, electric or gas-powered mower, or a riding mower or lawn tractor.

Tip 8 — Maintain your mower .
Keeping your mower in tip-top shape requires some “mow-how,” like how to sharpen the blade and change the oil. In return, your mower will give you years of service.

Tip 9 — In the fall, fill in. Seed bare patches in time for the coming season. Consider using a natural fertilizer or compost tea to work with the organisms in the soil to strengthen roots, aerate and build your lawn’s resistance to drought.

Tip 10 — Spring into lawn care.
Aerate the soil and build up low spots with topsoil. Prevent summer reads with pre-emergent herbicides. A solution of corn gluten meal now, before weeds germinate, will stop them in their tracks.

Tip 11 — Think about alternatives.
Opt for a grass alternative or a different ground cover that can help fill patchy lawns, prevent hill erosion and save water.

Tip 12 — Go artificial. Today’s fake turf looks anything but. Some have thatch and multifaceted blades that mimic the original. In addition, they are durable and fade-resistant and require no mowing or watering.

11 WAYS
YOU’RE ACCIDENTALLY RUINING YOUR LAWN

1. Watering too often — give your grass a deep watering once a week rather than a little drink every day.
2. Watering at the wrong time — don’t water late in the day or evening.
3. Cutting your grass too short — this causes your turf to draw on stored energy and eventually starve.
4. Over-fertilizing — too much of a good thing is a bad thing.
5. Overlooking the soil — you can’t make up for poor soil, so find out what it’s missing.
6. Leaving tools and toys on the grass — this compacts the soil and damages the grass (not to mention cluttering your lawn).
7. Mowing with dull blades — this rips the ends of your grass and causes moisture to wick up and be expelled, exposing your grass to disease.
8. Eliminating all insects and spiders — many are beneficial to your lawn and garden.
9. Dedicating one area to your dog — let your dogs have the run of the yard or mulch a specific area for them to run around in and do their business.
10. Ignoring weeds — get rid of them early before they propagate.
11. Mowing while wet — this damages the turf and can spread diseases and weeds.

Source: Bobvila.com

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What is a weed?
A weed is simply a plant growing where it is not wanted and in competition with your cultivated plants. For example, if you are intending to grow strawberries, you don’t want other plants (weeds) taking over your patch.

Weeds have many common traits:
• Abundant seed productivity — sometimes tens of thousands of seeds per plant
• Rapid population establishment and spread
• Long-term survival — seeds go dormant but then sprout just as soon as conditions are right.

See WEEDS on 15

13 COMMON WEEDS

- **Bindweed** — Best tip: prevention or early intervention, use landscape fabric placed over soil then covered with bark, rock or other plant-derived product
- **Lambsquarters** — Best tip: cultivate out of your garden with sharp hoe.
- **Pigweed** — Best tip: Pull it out before it flowers
- **Buckhorn Plantain** — Best tip: hand weed this plant and destroy it to remove it from your garden
- **Crabgrass** — Best tip: mow regularly to a height of 2 to 4 inches
- **Quackgrass** — Best tip: dig it out as soon as you see it in your garden
- **Chickweed** — Best tip: remove by hoeing or hand-pulling before it flowers
- **Dandelion** — Best tip: use hand trowel to dig out. Keep a vigorous and competitive lawn to shade the soil
- **Purslane** — Best tip: hand-weed and destroy the plant; it can live in your soil for years
- **Shepherd’s Purse** — Best tip: pull out this weed before it seeds
- **Nutsedge** — Best tip: remove small plants before they develop tubers; eliminate wet conditions that favor nutsedge growth
- **Canadian Thistle** — Best tip: destroy by pulling or hoeing before they become securely rooted; stress the plant and force it to use stored root nutrients
- **Creeping Charlie** — Best tip: improve soil drainage or water less frequently to dry the soil

Source: Almanac.com, Blog.gardeningknowhow.com
WEEDS
Continued from Page 14

Why are weeds such a problem?
They reduce crop yield by competing for water, light, soil nutrients, and space. Some produce chemical substances, which are toxic to crop plants, and often animals and humans.

TOP 5 weed control tips

1. Never let them set seed
Be sure to remove weeds before they flower and produce seeds. Pigweed, purslane, Shepherd’s purse, chickweed, and lambsquarters are examples. Their seeds are very small and light enough to be blown by the wind over short distances, spreading profusely and often surviving for decades in the soil.
It may take a few years to get weed-free. On average, the bulk of your weed seeds will be depleted in about five years if no additional seeds are added. Diligence is key.

2. Mulch
Apply 2 to 3 inches of mulch or use landscape fabric or black plastic. Mulch not only blocks weed seeds from sunlight so they don’t germinate, but also promotes better water retention, provides needed nutrients as it decomposes over time, and moderates soil temperatures.
TIP: If you mow or blow leaves in the fall, get a shredder to turn those leaves into garden mulch — and save yourself the costs of buying bags of mulch.

3. Use tools
A garden hoe, tiller or even hand weeding can work, especially in small spaces. Keep your tools clean to avoid spreading weed seeds or plant parts.

4. Establish a perimeter
Pay special attention to the area adjoining your flowerbed, garden, natural area or lawn and establish a weed-free perimeter. Mow or mulch the area, or pull or dig up weeds as they emerge.

5. Pay special attention to perennial weed
When you deal with perennials, you need to dig up any roots, underground tubers and rhizomes without leaving fragments behind. New weeds can grow from any pieces that break off and remain in the soil.
TIP: Cut off the emerged green part of the weed with your hoe or mower — repeating the process quickly each time it regrows. Without leaves needed for photosynthesis, the underground plant parts will become weakened and may eventually die.

Good weeds vs. bad weeds
Not all weeds are bad. Many weeds stabilize the soil and add organic matter. Some are edible to humans and provide habitat and food for wildlife, too. For good weeds, cut the leaves back monthly and tuck them under the mulch, or lay them on top of the soil to naturally decompose.

THINK SMALL
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during the growing season. You’ll have produce all summer, but not all at once.
• Companion planting conserves space and cuts down on pest infestations. Shade-tolerant plants benefit from being planted next to taller crops. Basil likes a respite from the hot sun and does well planted next to tomatoes. Early harvested vegetables can be planted with slower-growing crops, which won’t take over the space until the spring harvested vegetables are gone.

• Grow in containers that you can squeeze into spaces on your patio or elsewhere. Virtually any fruit, vegetable or herb can be grown in a container if the container is large enough for it.
  - herbs and greens can grow in small pots or hanging baskets
  - fruiting plants such as tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers work best in 5-gallon containers or larger.
• Windowsill gardens can provide an easy, low-space option for plants that are frequently harvested, such as lettuce or herbs.
10 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU!

Bad Axe
1314 Sand Beach Rd.
989-269-9249

Birch Run
8461 Main St.
989-624-9356

Burton
4135 Davison Rd.
810-742-3364

Caro
415 Biebel Rd.
989-673-8400

Fenton
2139 W. Baldwin Rd.
810-655-4886

Lapeer
3120 N. Lapeer Rd.
810-664-3798

Marlette
7454 Van Dyke Hwy.
810-346-2761

Reese
9952 Saginaw St.
989-868-4165

Saginaw
6150 Bay Rd.
989-791-1234

Sandusky
989 W. Sanilac Rd.
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