

Compliments of Rosario Hunter

*Good to Be*

issue 08

# HOME

*get creative*  
with your  
**Curb Appeal**

*Tips to elevate your  
home's exterior* | PAGE 24

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*swimming in comfort* | 44



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## Front of Tear Out Card 1

### SUMMER TOMATOES with burrata and grilled bread

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6 slices sourdough bread  
¼ c. extra-virgin olive oil  
4 medium beefsteak tomatoes,  
washed and cored  
One 4-oz. ball burrata  
1 c. medley tomatoes  
1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar  
Kosher salt and freshly ground  
black pepper  
12 small basil leaves



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REALTOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

## Back of Tear Out Card 1



**SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER**

1. Heat a grill to medium-high heat.
2. Brush the bread slices on one side with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and place them on the grill, oiled sides down. Cook until they get a light, evenly colored char, moving them frequently. Cut the grilled bread in half and set aside.
3. Slice the beefsteak tomatoes into ¼-inch slices and arrange them on a large plate, overlapping slightly. Place the burrata in the center of the tomatoes. Halve the small tomatoes and scatter them around the plate. Drizzle the vinegar and remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil over all the tomatoes and season generously with salt and pepper. Garnish with the basil leaves and serve with the grilled bread.

Excerpted from *The Row 34 Cookbook: Stories and Recipes from a Neighborhood Oyster Bar* by Jeremy Sewall and Erin Byers Murray, Rizzoli New York, 2021. Images by Michael Harlan Turkell.



Dear Bill and Judy,

Welcome to Good to Be Home magazine!

Hi, my name is Rosie and I am so excited to go on this journey with you to find your perfect home. I have been a realtor for 16 years with a native tongue in the Spanish language. Because of this, one of my goals is to give guidance to my community on how to buy and sell their home while receiving the best return possible.

This magazine is here to give you ideas to spruce up your home, inform you about local excitement, and provide you with some yummy tips and tricks in the kitchen to really make it smell like home. I hope the articles are informative and entertaining and you find everything you need to fill your home with positivity.

Please feel free to share this magazine with your loved ones as well. I would love to hear what they think of Good to Be Home, too!

### Rosie Hunter



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# FANS: *a breath of fresh air*

**written by:** MATTHEW BRADY

An almost universal way to stay cool and comfortable at home, especially during summer, is by using a fan. On top of that, fans can improve your home environment in several ways.

### CEILING FANS

Is there anything more comforting than relaxing at home with a fan gently blowing air down on you from above? Here's what you can do to maximize your ceiling fan benefits:

- In the summer, run them counterclockwise so warm air is lifted toward the ceiling and cool air is delivered down to you.
- Frequently dust the entire unit and the ceiling above it. You'd be surprised at how quickly dirt and dust accumulate, especially on top of the blades—and that's cascading down on you if you don't perform regular upkeep.

### EXHAUST FANS

Having a bathroom fan can be an important component of overall health, as it takes the humidity of this confined space and removes it from your house. This can improve overall air quality, but, more importantly, it can help prevent mold from

growing in this frequently used room. You should check your bathroom fan a few times a year, and clean it by doing the following:

- Pull the cover down, removing it if need be, before cleaning it with soapy water.
- Check the fan itself. It may be covered with dirt, grime, and dust from constant use. Turn the power off to the unit, and then clean it with a cloth or a vacuum.

### ATTIC FANS

These fans are the unsung heroes of the home. This is especially true during blistering summer months when attic temperatures can hit upward of 150 degrees or more. This heat can bleed down into your home, making it warmer. An attic fan sucks in cooler (relatively speaking) air from outside and shoots the hot air out, delivering a better living environment for you and lower home-cooling costs. For the best results:

- Run it at the hottest time during the afternoon, which will maximize its effectiveness.
- Have it serviced by a professional every few years.

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# comfortable upgrades YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE NEEDS

written by:  
NATHAN SMITH

**W**ith warmer weather comes the luxury of spending relaxing days and pleasant evenings on your patio or deck. However, your space has more relaxation potential than you may think. By making a few upgrades, you can create a new level of comfort in your outdoor living space.

## CUSHIONS

If you'd like to improve the support of your patio furniture without buying a new set, adding cushions can give your furnishings new life. Make sure any cushion you get is as large as or slightly smaller than your seat, and that cushions with a back are almost as tall as the chair's backrest. If you regularly entertain guests, keep a few floor cushions handy. These plush seats don't take up much space and are easily stored away when not in use. A cushion's fabric will significantly impact how you use your furniture. Popular cushion fabrics include:

- **Vinyl:** easy to clean and cost-effective, but it can become hot to the touch in sunlight
- **Cotton:** comfortable and budget-friendly, but it's prone to mildew and fading if not treated
- **Textilene:** waterproof and stands up to wear and tear, but it can fade or become hot to the touch when exposed to the sun
- **Solution-dyed acrylic:** durable, easy to clean, and soft to the touch

## HAMMOCK

If you're looking to add a new piece of furniture to your space, you can't get much more comfortable than a hammock. There are a few hammock styles to choose from. Rope hammocks are made of cotton or polyester and designed for warm climates, as airflow isn't restricted. Due to a tighter weave, fabric hammocks tend to be stronger, more durable, and better suited for cooler climates. There are also hammock chairs and swings that provide the same relaxing experience without lying down. When choosing a hammock, don't forget to select a stand, which will come in wood and metal varieties, to eliminate the guesswork of where to place it. If possible, keep the hammock in a space protected from the elements for additional comfort.



## OUTDOOR RUGS

An outdoor rug immediately brings an element of warmth and character, and it will also give a cushioning layer between your feet and the ground. Place your furniture around a rug to create a social seating arrangement. You may even want to add multiple rugs for different areas, such as your cooking, dining, and lounging spaces. Here are a few common rug materials to consider.

- **Polypropylene:** stands up to moisture, stains, and foot traffic but is best kept away from firepits or grills, as it is sensitive to heat
- **Polyester:** durable, long-lasting, and fade-resistant, but some stains will be hard to remove
- **Nylon:** easy to clean, stain-resistant, and stands up to foot traffic but can become hot underfoot when placed in sunlight



## SHADE

Adding a roof to your patio or deck can shield you from the sun for hours of outdoor enjoyment. You'll need to decide between a permanent structure or one that is removable. Pergolas and awnings are more permanent additions that can enhance the appearance of your home or patio. Canopies, shade sails, and umbrellas also provide plenty of shade, but they can be moved or taken down at the end of the season. Patio drapes are another solid choice for additional sun protection and an added level of privacy. Don't underestimate natural resources—if you have a leafy tree near your deck or patio, it may provide all the shade you need.



## HOT TUB

Take your yard's comfort to a new level with a hot tub. Even if the temperatures begin to rise, you can set the hot tub's temperature lower for a summer soak or use it after the sun goes down. There are styles to fit everyone's preferences, including in-ground or portable, inflatable or wooden, and circular or square. And there are plenty of accessories that can help personalize your hot tub, such as bars, drink holders, speakers, and lights. If you're looking for an entertaining focal point for your outdoor space, a hot tub can be a relaxing addition.



## PEST DETERRENTS

If you want to avoid becoming the main course while enjoying your outside space, try these options to help keep pests away.

- Add marigolds to gardens and containers near your outdoor space to deter mosquitoes.
- Grow herbs, such as basil, mint, lemongrass, and lavender, to ward off various insects.
- Burn citronella candles to help drive away mosquitoes and flies.

*Don't let your outdoor space's potential go to waste! Create a relaxing retreat you'll enjoy for multiple seasons.*

# Little Free Libraries:

## SHARING BOOKS IN SMALL PLACES

written by: LAUREN KIM

photos by: LITTLE FREE LIBRARY,  
UNLESS NOTED



*These mini libraries are run on an honor system, and anyone can donate a book.*

You might have spotted something called a Little Free Library, a container sometimes mounted on a post and filled with books, in your neighborhood. These volunteer-led, miniature libraries are part of a book-sharing movement started by Little Free Library, a nonprofit organization founded in 2012 that's based in Hudson, Wisconsin. There are at least 125,000 registered Little Free Libraries in 110 countries around the world.

### *How it works*

These mini libraries are run on an honor system, and anyone can donate a book. For instance, you could add a children's publication or pick out a novel to read yourself. If you borrow something, you can keep it if you like, but you are encouraged to donate a book in return.

### *Launch your own*

To create a library, you can build your own structure or purchase one from the association; its website provides free building plans and installation tips. Once you have your box set up, you can register it

by purchasing a sign from the organization. The plaque will be inscribed with your library's unique charter number, and then you can add your location to the Little Free Library online map, which shows where to find registered libraries worldwide. The organization gives registered Little Free Library owners a steward's packet filled with tips and advice, access to discounted books, and membership to a Facebook support group.

### *Become a librarian*

You can build your own Little Free Library even if you aren't handy. Some libraries have been created from old mailboxes, repurposed newspaper vending boxes, and even plastic storage bins. Your book-sharing box only needs a door or a lid and enough weatherproofed space to hold a small collection of items to read. You can decorate or paint your structure however you like. Once your library is up and running, be sure to check it regularly to keep it clean and well-stocked.

**For more info, visit [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org)**





# PLANNING FOR A *successful* Summer Home Sale

written by:  
CHRISTY MURDOCK EDGAR



**In many markets, spring is prime time for new listings. However, summer can also be a popular choice, providing unique opportunities for both buyers and sellers. If you are thinking of selling your home this summer, follow these tips to initiate a successful sale on your terms.**

## Understanding the Summertime Buyer

Historically, the best time to sell a home is between March and May. However, buyers can be just as motivated during the summer months—especially right before back-to-school time. So how can you take advantage of the upside the summer market offers and communicate with those higher-paying summer buyers?

- Homebuyers may be taking advantage of the flexibility offered by the out-of-school season. This may be especially true for buyers who are relocating from a distant market and have been waiting for school to end so that they can go all-in on their home search.
- Summertime buyers who need to settle in before the start of the new school year may be willing to pay more for a home if the seller has a timeline that matches their own.
- Inventory can be reduced in the summer, especially toward the end of the season. If most of the homes in your market were snapped up during the spring, you may find that there are plenty of disappointed buyers who are eager to check out your summertime listing.

- Summer is an opportunity to present your home at its best. Rather than buying when there's still snow on the ground or when the first buds are coming out on the trees, buyers are seeing your listing in the full bloom of summer. That can provide a distinct advantage, improving curb appeal and helping your home look better inside and out.

## Summer Staging

A host of studies have shown that staging helps homes sell for more at any time of year, but summer staging can



be uniquely effective. Here's how to maximize the potential of your home for summertime buyers.

#### *Keep things cool*

When you know buyers are coming to look at your home, turn up the AC, turn on the ceiling fans, and make sure your home is comfortably cool. Set out a bowl or bin filled with ice and bottles of sparkling water or a pitcher of spa water—ice water filled with lemon or cucumber slices. The idea is to make your home feel like an oasis from the summer heat, keeping potential buyers inside long enough to fall in love with it.

#### *Stage outdoors*

You have a unique advantage in the summer selling season since you can sell outdoor living potential along with your interior spaces. Stage every single outdoor space, from your front porch to your deck or patio, to emphasize how much living can go on in your outdoor spaces.

#### *Lighten up*

Replace heavy drapes with sheer or light curtains so that summer sunlight streams into your home. Replace heavy throw blankets with lightweight towels or other summery linens, and swap velvet throw pillows with linen and cotton options in light or bright colors.

#### *Consider color*

You can get away with fun pops of color now that might feel out of place other times of the year. If you have a neutral interior, consider adding bright citrus shades to grab attention and make your home more memorable.

### **Selling from a Distance**

One of the challenges of a summer home sale is that you may find yourself negotiating the sale of your home while traveling or on vacation. Here are some strategies to keep in mind to make a summertime sale a little easier.



- Communicate clearly with your agent to ensure that you are on the same page when it comes to price, timeline, and other factors before you list your home.
- Understand the platforms your agent uses for electronic communication, online document signing, and virtual transaction management. Make sure that your agent has your most up-to-date email address and phone number.
- Even though you're on vacation, check in for information from your agent or broker regularly to ensure that you are aware of anything that's time-sensitive. You may want to designate two specific times of day to check your email and voicemail messages.
- Try to plan ahead for the unexpected. It's not easy to negotiate a purchase price from the middle of a theme park or to choose a closing date from a kayak. Understand your time constraints, and do what you need to do in order to make good decisions.

***Summer can be the best time of year for selling your home. Go into it with a positive perspective to help make the most of the opportunities the summer market has to offer.***



# Colors in harmony

written by: RACHEL STEVENS

If you've ever had trouble choosing a paint color for your home or wondered how designers and artists always find the best color combinations, you're not alone. Their secret is the application of color theory to every detail. Color theory is a useful tool you can use when choosing colors for your paint, furniture, and finishes—and it's easier to implement than you might think.

## The idea of color theory

Color theory is both a science and an art that involves the study of hues and how to use them in harmony. In art, color

can affect the mood and aesthetics of a piece, but the same principles apply to home design.

### The color wheel

The characteristics of every color are determined primarily by its hue. The first color wheel dates to the seventeenth century, when Sir Isaac Newton observed the visible spectrum of light during his prism experiment. He saw that all color combinations came from three primary colors. From those three, he discovered secondary and tertiary color combinations.

- **Primary colors:** red, yellow, and blue
- **Secondary colors:** primary colors mixed in various combinations that result in green, orange, and purple
- **Tertiary colors:** colors made from one primary and one secondary color, such as blue-green

### Shade, tint, and tone

American painter Albert H. Munsell expanded Newton's ideas into a three-dimensional color tree by adding the categories of chroma (the purity or intensity of a color) and color value (the lightness or darkness of a color). The interactions of hue, chroma, a value are the basis by which we still interpret color today as shade, tint, and tone, which can change a color's intensity and its appearance when next to other colors. That's why you might think a bright red and bright green look like the holidays but a burgundy and forest green look regal.

- **Shade:** a color to which black has been added
- **Tint:** a color to which white has been added
- **Tone:** a color to which black and white (or gray) have been added

“ THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EVERY COLOR ARE DETERMINED PRIMARILY BY ITS HUE. ”





### ***How to apply color theory in design***

Now that you understand how colors interact, you can use the relationships of all colors to find a beautiful palette you can use in your home.

#### ***Step 1: Pick a color temperature***

Choosing a color temperature for your room is the first step to using color theory in design. Color temperatures range from cool to warm, and, just like a thermometer, you can gauge with your eyes how cold or warm a color is. Depending on a color's temperature, it can invoke feelings of joy and passion or relaxation and creativity. Traditionally, the three coolest colors are blue, green, and purple, but they can become warm if they're mixed with a warm shade. The same applies to warm colors when mixed with cool shades. Even neutral colors have a temperature; you just need to determine their undertone.

For example, a cool-blue bathroom could feel like a serene spa, while a warm-yellow bathroom could feel like a burst of energy in the morning. Think about what time of day you like to shower and when you spend the most time in your bathroom. Use color temperature according to

your preferences and how you want to feel when you step into the room. You can mix warm and cool colors or stick to just one color temperature depending on the look you're going for. A mixed color temperature palette can offer a more playful and bolder atmosphere than a single color temperature can.

#### ***Step 2: Choose a color scheme***

It's time to decide which colors you want to use. Be mindful that the more colors you use, the more carefully you'll need to place them. The following combinations are known as harmonies, and each will bring a unique look to your space:

- **Monochrome:** Three shades, tones, and tints of the same color create a subtle and relaxing aesthetic. A bathroom or bedroom is the best space for a monochrome color scheme.
- **Complementary:** Two colors that are on opposite sides of the color wheel. This combination will emphasize the colors you choose for a bold look. A formal dining room or entryway looks great with complementary colors.



- **Analogous:** Three side-by-side colors on the color wheel that offer an understated look. Consider an analogous color scheme for an office or another area that needs a hint of color without looking busy.
- **Triadic:** Three evenly spaced colors on the color wheel that create a vibrant look using one dominant color and two accent colors. Use a triadic palette in a room with no windows, such as a finished basement.
- **Tetradic (double complementary):** Four colors evenly spaced on the color wheel. Typically, there is one dominant color and three accent colors. Use a tetradic scheme in a child's bedroom or creative hobby space.

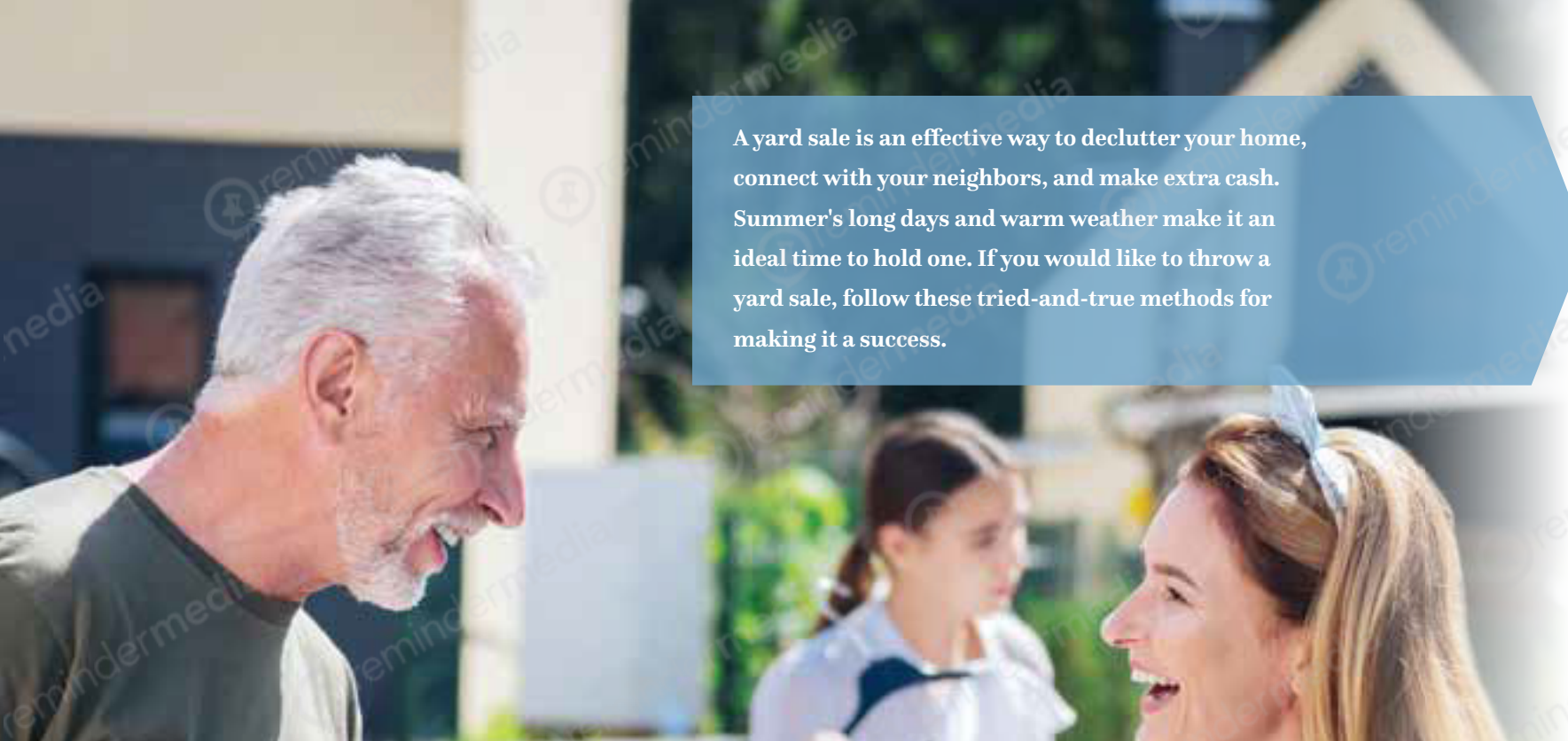
### ***Step 3: Balance your palette***

How can you determine how much of each color to use? It can be easy to find a color you love and run with it, but make sure that you attractively balance your palette. Most designers abide by the 60/30/10 rule: a dominant color covers about 60 percent of the room, a secondary hue takes up about 30 percent of the room, and accent colors top off the room at 10 percent. This rule doesn't just apply to paint—it can be used for every element in the room. Pillows, furniture, lampshades, window treatments, and rugs should be a part of the color equation. The 60/30/10 rule is just a guideline, though, so don't be afraid to find your perfect balance.

Be sure to think about how your lighting will interact with the colors in the space too. As previously mentioned, white and black affect the shade and tint of colors. If you have less natural light hitting the room, you can add pops of white. If your room is full of sunshine, consider adding dark accents.

***When applied properly, color theory can transform your home into a space you love. For more help, an interior designer can be a great source of expert information and inspiration.***





A yard sale is an effective way to declutter your home, connect with your neighbors, and make extra cash. Summer's long days and warm weather make it an ideal time to hold one. If you would like to throw a yard sale, follow these tried-and-true methods for making it a success.

# throw your most successful **YARD SALE** THIS SUMMER

written by: LAUREN KIM



## GET PERMISSION

Some municipalities require a permit and sometimes a fee to host a sale; research your area's requirements at least a few weeks before your event so you are set to go on the big day.

## PICK A DATE AND TIME

You will get the most visitors to your yard sale if you hold it on a Saturday between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Avoid weekends that fall on or near holidays like Memorial Day and the Fourth of July, unless your area is a highly visited tourist destination. If your town holds a town-wide yard sale, schedule yours during that time. Otherwise, check if any neighbors would like to hold a yard sale at the same time as you to draw in more buyers.

## GET THE WORD OUT

Much of your sale's chances for success rest on how well you publicize it. Promote it at least a week in advance by telling your friends and family about it and by sharing it on social media. Include your event's date, time, and location. Post your sale in a local Facebook yard-sale group; such groups can have thousands of members. Post signs around your community about your sale, and make your posters stand out by writing your event's information in big letters on bright-colored paper. Hang signs throughout your community and on busy streets. Your signs could include hand-drawn arrows that point the way to your sale. You can also attach balloons or pinwheels to your posters on the day of your event to attract attention. Don't forget to remove your signs once your sale is over.

## MAKE IT LOOK GOOD

How you organize your sale can make it or break it—what it looks like from the street can encourage

passersby to shop or keep driving. Your items will look their best if you clean or repair them before your event. You should make your most appealing merchandise clearly visible. If possible, hang clothing from a rack or a clothesline for easier browsing. Help shoppers by organizing items by type on tables or in clear plastic bins. Place toys at ground level or on low surfaces so young shoppers can reach them.

## PRICE IT RIGHT

A general yard-sale rule is to never ask for more than 10 percent of an item's retail price, so if you bought an item for \$30, you might want to charge no more than \$3 for it. However, keep in mind that this guideline doesn't apply to highly collectible vintage pieces that could sell for more. Check other local yard sales or websites like eBay or Craigslist for guidance on how to set prices for items like these. To help customers understand the value of your items, you could put printouts of similar online listings next to your merchandise.

## TAGGING ITEMS

You should clearly label your items with their prices. Color-coding your price tags will make shopping easier for customers. For example, anything marked with a green sticker costs \$1 or less, items that have a yellow price tag are \$5 or more, and so on. Be sure to put a sign out front that explains your color-coding system.

## COMPLETING A SALE

Have small bills and coins on hand on the day of your sale to make change for customers. If you run into bargain hunters who ask for lower prices than you'd like, try negotiating a mutually agreeable amount. Finally, provide paper or plastic bags to make it easier for your customers to bring their purchases home.

# get creative with your **Curb Appeal**

**written by:** ALEXA BRICKER

**photography by:** ANTHONY WILDER DESIGN/  
BUILD, INC., UNLESS NOTED



**Before**



**photo by:** JOHN COLE

**After**

Homeowners spend a lot of time and energy on improving their home's interior. Kitchen and bathroom remodels are among the top renovations people make in an effort to enhance their home's livability and resale value. In fact, Google Trends showed that "kitchen remodel" searches were up 77 percent between 2020 and 2021.

There's no question that putting your renovation budget toward interior improvements can be beneficial when it comes time to sell. However, exterior improvements can be just as

lucrative, if not more so. Curb appeal is king when it comes to ROI (return on investment), and you don't have to look too closely to see why.

## **Curb Appeal Counts**

According to the National Association of REALTORS®, 94 percent of real estate agents recommend curb appeal improvements before listing a home. But upping your curb appeal isn't only important for those who plan to sell—it's crucial for all homeowners.

Anthony Wilder, founder of Anthony Wilder Architecture, Interior Design, and Construction, is a master of hardscaping and exterior architecture. His team has done award-winning work for clients in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, and his firm has a special focus on exterior architecture, design, and landscaping. When starting a project for a new client, Wilder's team focuses on the exterior from the very beginning, understanding the role curb appeal has in transforming a home's overall aesthetic.

One of their recent projects, a split-level brick home in Falls Church, Virginia, is a prime example. Of the difference exterior enhancements can make for how the residents feel about their home, Wilder says: "The masking of the building in this case was very shuttered, old, and abandoned looking. We brightened it up with a fresh face, and once it came to life, we knew the client would love what we did with it. They absolutely hated the front of their house, but this made them look at it differently."

Wilder's team removed the home's antebellum-era pillars and replaced dated shutters with warm wood frames to elongate the front of the home. The key with a split level, he says, is to implement visual tricks, such as they did with the windows, to prevent the home from looking like it's cut in half.

In the case of that home, the removal of a few exterior elements, the addition of modern hardware, and a new paint job brought it out of the nineteenth century and into the twenty-first century.

### *Areas of Focus*

While architectural changes can make a world of difference, you don't necessarily have to go dramatic when making exterior improvements to your home if you don't want to or feel that it isn't needed. Simple changes, such as a fresh coat of paint, new lighting fixtures, and beautiful landscaping, can work wonders.

### *Painting*

There's virtually nothing that a new coat of paint can't fix. Wilder notes that, for many of the projects his team has worked on, painting the home's exterior has made one of the biggest visual differences and casts a home in a completely new light. In their renovation of a brick colonial in Potomac, Maryland, his

photo by: GETTY IMAGES



photo by: PAUL BURKE



**Before**



**After**

photo by: GETTY IMAGES



team painted over faded multicolor brick with a creamy white color that makes the home more inviting for its socially active owners. If you want to make a nice impression on guests and passersby, painting your exterior is one of the simplest and least expensive ways to do so.

#### *Hardscaping*

Stone pavers for entryways and patios are not only visually appealing but also greatly improve the functionality of a front yard or backyard, especially for homeowners who like to spend time outdoors. If a home's front door is tucked away or is opposite from the driveway, like in the brick colonial project, you can create interest with a stone pathway lined with greenery that leads to the door. In the backyard, a paved patio with built-in elements such as a firepit or retaining wall can help you get more use out of your yard for hosting or relaxing.

#### *Landscaping*

The right kind of landscaping draws the eyes up and frames the house. It is one of the best investments you can make for your home in terms of return. However, the key is to ensure the landscaping you choose is a good fit for your home and the surrounding area. It's also important to be mindful of the trees and shrubs you choose because, for example, if you plant a two-foot shrub in front of a window, that shrub could grow to five or six feet, depending on its type. Choosing native plants and trees can be beneficial, too, as they will be more likely to thrive in your environment with minimal upkeep and will look more natural.

#### *Maintenance Matters*

The last and most important part of improving your home's curb appeal is to ensure you maintain it. Anyone can repaint their home's exterior, plant trees and flowers, and install a new front door. However, if you don't work to keep up with the improvements you made, your curb appeal and its value will suffer. If you're not much of a home-improvement aficionado



*Before*



photo by: JOHN COLE

*After*



photo by: JOHN COLE

or don't have time to put toward lawn care, hiring a contractor can help you get the most bang for your buck when it comes to keeping your exterior maintained.

Set a schedule to keep up with small tasks, such as trimming back trees and shrubs, pulling weeds, and pressure-washing walkways, and pay particular attention to your front door and entryway. Keep the pathway to the door free of leaves and debris, and make sure the door is clean and that there are no chips in the paint. The same goes for maintaining the paint job on your window trim and shutters.

Pay attention to improvements you feel will make the biggest difference for your household. If you're keen on spending time in the backyard, a new patio and garden could be life-changing updates. If you're not a fan of cutting the grass, implementing more hardscaping can eliminate the surface area you have to cut. And if your home is one of the oldest in your neighborhood, modern improvements might help you feel more comfortable and at home there.

On the other hand, you shouldn't allow what's popular or trendy in your area to completely sway the decisions you make when it comes to your curb appeal. Focus on balancing your own personal tastes and needs with what will look best and appeal to future buyers, but don't sacrifice your style to do so.

***Never underestimate the value good exterior design can have on your home. When it comes to curb appeal improvements, a little bit goes a long way and can dramatically increase your quality of life and the satisfaction you have in your home.***

**For more info, visit [anthonywilder.com](http://anthonywilder.com)**



**Before**

### **Personality Pops**

While curb appeal is important for your home's value and visual appeal, it's not the only reason to improve it. Ultimately, you and your family are the one's spending the majority of your time in your home. Therefore, changes to your curb appeal can amount to big changes in the pride you have in your home and the way it reflects your personality.



**After**

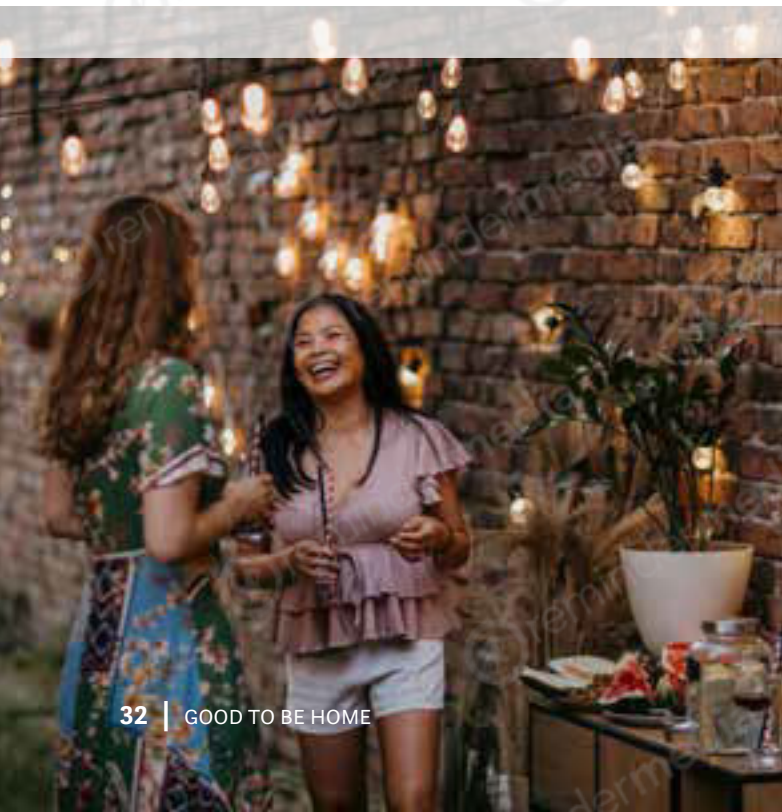


**photo by: GETTY IMAGES**



# 5 BACKYARD Lighting Solutions

written by:  
RACHEL STEVENS



Even when the days are long and full of sunshine, nighttime can put a damper on your fun summer backyard activities. If you're looking for ways to boost your yard's security, ambience, and usability, you could benefit from lighting upgrades.

## DECK LIGHTING

No matter how high up or close to the ground your deck is, it can be dangerous to leave it unlit. Avoid tripping hazards by installing a series of LED lights by your deck stairs and around its perimeter. A typical deck light is around two inches in diameter, and it's recommended to have two for each stair tread. Space the lights about four feet apart around the perimeter of your deck.

## PATH LIGHTING

Navigate and highlight your walkways with path lights. While shopping, look for stainless-steel lights for the best water resistance and overall lifespan, but avoid motion-activated lights, as you want them to continuously provide a completely lit path ahead. Most people opt for solar lights that you can drive into the ground with stakes to eliminate the need for extra wires. Just be sure to place them in areas that receive direct sunlight so they will have enough power to stay bright through the night.

## STRING LIGHTING

If you have a pergola, a gazebo, or another outdoor entertaining area, string lights are a must-have. This accent lighting lets you keep the conversation going in a warm and intimate atmosphere. Measure the length around the area you want to highlight, and add a few feet so they can hang naturally. As with path lighting, consider investing in solar-powered lights to avoid the need to run a wire outside. If you do run a wire, make sure it's weather-resistant and placed out of the way to avoid tripping.

## SECURITY LIGHTING

Nothing is more important than keeping you and your loved ones safe. That's why it's ideal to install security lighting around your home. These wide beams, also known as floodlights, can detect motion when activated and will alert you to an unwanted visitor on your property. If you have a smart-home system, such as Ring, you can purchase a floodlight that will connect to your system and your smart-home assistant. Look for floodlights that reach an appropriate area so you won't pick up activity in your neighbor's yard and shine light into their home.



## WALL LIGHTING

Wall sconces and mounted lanterns add an elegant and sophisticated touch to shady and recessed areas of your backyard. If you have space on your exterior walls, talk to an electrician about installing semi-flush-mount or flush-mount sconces and lanterns. By doing so, you can ensure even the darkest parts of your yard are well lit and highlight your exterior wall decor.

**Who says that the sunset needs to put a damper on your backyard activities? Try these lighting solutions to keep you and your loved ones safe while enjoying time in your yard.**

# THE ART OF

# Gatherings

interview with: REBECCA LANG

written by: MATTHEW BRADY

Entertaining expert Rebecca Lang discusses how to plan a truly successful get-together, offers tips for summer soirees, and shares recipes from her latest book, *Y'all Come Over*.

**Who influenced you about proper manners, etiquette, and planning?** One person is my grandmother, who was a florist and had a gift for making everyone feel welcome without looking like she went to any extra effort. The other person was Becky Rawlins, who lived next door to us. She was on top of it anytime anybody needed anything. For example, in the South, when people pass away, you immediately figure out who's bringing the food, flowers, and so on. She did all of that and loved doing it.

**Do parties need to be perfect?** If you're trying to make everything perfect, you're not going to have any fun at your party. When people have guests over, they usually focus on things like "Is my house clean enough?" Nobody cares about that stuff. The only exception to this is the powder room, which should be spotless because people pay more attention to it. A dirty powder room is a pet peeve of mine.

**Do you have any other pet peeves you'd like to share?** Certainly high up on the list is an unclear invitation. The worst thing for a guest is to be confused

about any aspect of the get-together. This happened to me a few years ago.

I had elaborately decorated the front door at our house for a party, but the back door was a lot easier to get to. We had the outside lights on at both doors, so everyone came through the back door, which led them through our laundry room. Live and learn.

**Is planning an outdoor get-together easier in some respects?** It depends on where you live, and it depends on what part of summer. If I were having an outside party in August in Georgia, everybody would be suffering. In general, though, with an outdoor party, there's a lot less stress. It's outside, it's fun, it's festive, and, because of COVID, everybody is used to hanging out by the grill or on the front porch just to stay in fresh air. For these events, I love putting a little bowl of individual insect-repellent wipes near the grill or bar and little pretty white washcloths in a cooler with some ice to refresh guests.

**What does preparation mean to a successful get-together?** That's a great question. *Everything* should be prepared ahead of time so you can focus solely on your guests once they arrive. Grilling is the one exception: it's a very social cooking method.

**Is it good etiquette for guests to help clean up?**

When you come to our house, my husband and I want you to relax and have a nice time. If people try to start cleaning, we respectfully say, "No, we've got it." Ideally, you should have an empty dishwasher when you start your party to make cleanup easier. Besides, everybody has their own way of washing things and putting things away.

**Some consider preparing food to be a chore. How can they make it more enjoyable?** There are times

when it's a chore. We all face that—nobody likes scrambling to dig stuff out of the refrigerator and turn it into something somewhat impressive for a nightly dinner. But when you're having a party, cooking becomes part of the festivities.

Knowing that what I'm cooking is going to be enjoyed by other people is always fun. My mindset is I'm creating a memorable experience when people come over and giving a gift to them.

**Do you feel that having an "others-first" mindset is essential to not only hosting but also having a better society?** During COVID, I feel like we've lost a little bit of thoughtfulness. And being thoughtful is one of the greatest attributes of a human being. It can be anything from sending a text or a card in the mail on a bad day to holding open a door to saying "Thank you" and smiling at people working in the grocery store. It's something anyone can work on wherever they live. Hopefully, when we look back on all this, it makes us better friends, neighbors, and family members.

**Can you put into words the joy that get-togethers provide?** I think that it's one of the greatest blessings we have as human beings. No matter where we live, what we do for a living, or who's at the table, sitting and sharing a meal with others gives you a sense of community with them. This has been taken away from us to different degrees during COVID, so to be able to do this again is vital. Humans are social animals; we need to be around people.

Cooking is also comforting for me—if it's an awesome time, it's fun to cook; if it's a sad time, it brings me comfort to cook. But, overall, there's nothing like sitting at a table knowing you've put forth the effort to cook for the people seated there and they're enjoying your food and you're enjoying their company. It's such a simple pleasure, and I feel like it makes us all better people at the end of the day.

**For more info, visit [rebeccalangcooks.com](https://rebeccalangcooks.com)**



# GEORGIA *Shrimp Rolls*

recipe by and photo courtesy of: REBECCA LANG | SERVES 8

On a girls' trip to Martha's Vineyard, I fell in love with lobster rolls. My friend Jennifer Jaax and I took off on a journey on bicycles to find the island's best rolls. We heard they were served at a church right on the water as a fund-raiser. We sat in the grass and ate them beside our kickstands. With Georgia shrimp close by nearly all the time, I like making the standard Northern favorite with a Southern spin. It always reminds me I need to take girls' trips more often! Shrimp aren't as meaty as lobster, but they make this recipe much less expensive and more local. Buying pre-cooked wild shrimp at the seafood market makes this recipe incredibly easy. Make sure to use top-sliced hot dog buns for a touch of authenticity. You can make the shrimp salad one day in advance.

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 cup diced sweet onion
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 1/2 pounds cooked medium shrimp (with tails on) or 1 1/4 pounds cooked shrimp without tails
- 1/4 cup diced celery
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon table salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 8 top-sliced hot dog buns

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Combine sweet onion and lemon juice. Let sit for 20 minutes.
2. If shrimp have tails, remove them and discard. Cut shrimp in half so they will be bite-sized. Combine shrimp, onion and lemon juice mixture, and next 5 ingredients in a mixing bowl. Cover and chill while buns are toasting.
3. Spread butter on sides and bottom of hot dog buns. Toast outside of buns in a non-stick skillet or griddle, in batches if needed, over medium-low heat until browned. Remove buns from heat and stuff a heaping 1/3 cup shrimp mixture into each. Serve immediately.

©*Y'all Come Over: Charming Your Guests with New Recipes, Heirloom Treasures, and True Southern Hospitality* by Rebecca Lang, Rizzoli New York, 2021.



# EASY PEACH AND OATS *Cobbler*

recipe by and photo courtesy of: REBECCA LANG | SERVES 8

I learned the art of easy cobblers (among other things) from Nathalie Dupree. It's my go-to dessert for summer parties.

## INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup all-purpose soft-wheat flour (such as White Lily)
- 1¼ cups granulated sugar
- ¾ cup uncooked old-fashioned oats
- 1 tablespoon plus ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon table salt
- 1½ cups whole milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 cups peeled, pitted, and sliced peaches (1½ pounds frozen, thawed)

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. In a 10-inch cast-iron skillet, melt the butter in the oven while it's preheating. Once the butter is melted, remove the skillet from the oven.
2. Whisk together the flour and next 5 ingredients in a bowl. Whisk in the milk and vanilla.
3. Pour the batter over the melted butter in the hot skillet. (The butter will sizzle slightly and rise over the sides of the batter.) Arrange the peaches evenly over the batter.
4. Bake at 375°F for 45 to 50 minutes or until deep golden brown and shimmery with tiny bubbles. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

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# grow an edible **CONTAINER GARDEN** in no time

written by:  
LAUREN KIM

Do you dream of growing fresh summer vegetables, herbs, and fruits but don't have a lot of time or a big yard? It's easy to plant bountiful container gardens—all you need is a pot or two. Container gardening is perfect for small spaces, and you can grow these mini gardens almost anywhere, such as on a balcony, patio, or deck. Follow these tips, and you can harvest your own produce in a few weeks' time.

## CHOOSE YOUR CROPS

Pick plants that will thrive even if your area tends to get hot and humid. Tomatoes, peppers, beans, cucumbers, squash, and eggplant grow well in summer heat. You can also grow berries and herbs, such as strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, oregano, basil, dill, parsley, sage, and rosemary. Plant seedlings or more mature plants instead of seeds so you'll get produce more quickly. Look for plants that are bred for container gardening, as they are more suitable for growing in pots.

## PICK YOUR CONTAINERS

You'll need a container with plenty of room for your plants to grow, and the requirements may vary depending on what you're planting. For example, you could put four spinach plants in a six-inch-wide pot, but it's best to only put one tomato plant in a container that's eighteen to twenty-four inches wide. Almost any container, even a bucket, will work if it has drainage; you can use a drill to add holes for water to drain. The soil will stay moist longer in large planters than in small ones. Read your plants' tags or consult with someone at your gardening store to determine how big a pot you'll need. Some crops, such as herbs, cherry tomatoes, and strawberries, will also grow beautifully in hanging baskets.



## SEEK OUT THE LIGHT

Most container gardens need at least six hours of sunlight a day, and you can relocate containers as the day progresses to help them get more rays. If you put your planters on wheeled caddies or in lightweight plastic pots, they might be easier to move. Experiment with where you place your planters—it could take some time to determine the best spot for optimal growth.

## FEED YOUR PLANTS

Water, fertilizer, and an organic potting mix will give your plants the moisture and nutrients they need. Water your

potted garden once a day, preferably early in the morning or late at night, or whenever the soil feels dry. Your plants will eventually need additional nutrients, so provide these by adding a liquid organic fertilizer at least every two weeks.

## FOSTER GROWTH

Some plants need extra support to grow their best. Vine crops like squash and cucumbers may flourish on a stake or trellis, which will provide them with room to grow and better access to sunlight. Place wire cages around your tomato plants immediately after planting them to prevent their branches from drooping as they produce fruit.

## MIX IT UP

With some planning, you can grow different plants together in one pot. Combinations you can try are a tomato plant with basil and parsley, beans with squash, or colorful marigolds with cucumbers.

*If you want homegrown fruits, veggies, and herbs to enjoy this season, growing a container garden can be the solution. Try these tips to get your garden started!*



# SWIMMING IN comfort

written by:  
MATTHEW BRADY



Swimming has been a longtime American pastime. Part of the reason is accessibility: whether you live near a lake, a river, or an ocean, a refreshing body of water is often readily available.

And then there is the swimming pool, the oasis of the backyard. For decades, there were two options: an above-ground pool or an in-ground pool. But so much has changed since then.

Today, over ten million American homes reportedly have swimming pools. Plus, more than ever, the options seem limitless. But how can you determine what type of pool would work best for your yard? Read on to discover enticing new options in the swimming-pool landscape.

## **STOCK TANK POOL**

Let's start with perhaps the coziest pool out there, the stock tank. These pools—which were hot options the past few summers—are also known as country pools since they were originally used for feeding livestock. As it turns out, they make for convenient pools as well; they're super easy to add to your yard and maintain, and they only cost upward of a few hundred dollars. That can allow you to spend a little more on a pump if you want to make cleaning effortless.

*Stock Tank Pool Tips:* Keep in mind that they are usually metal, which means they will absorb the sun's summer rays. Try to ensure that they're placed in a shady area.

## **MODPOOL**

Also in the realm of repurposing are Modpools. Made of upcycled shipping containers, these pools

boast customization: they can be made for above-ground or in-ground layouts, and they are made specifically for the size of your backyard—so they can often be used the same day they are installed. And because they are literally modular pools, you can bring yours with you if you move.

**Modpool Tips:** Your Modpool can include smart controls, so you can remotely adjust things like the water temperature. For setup, you'll need to do some preparation, such as prepping your yard's landscape for delivery and setting up the electrical and gas connections.

### **SALTWATER POOL**

Love the feel of the ocean but not the drive to get there? You can bring the experience to you with a saltwater pool. This trendy option, which uses a converter to turn salt into a less harsh form of chlorine, can be a part of a new pool, or you can convert your existing chlorinated pool to saltwater. But the experience won't be exactly like traditional saltwater—and that's a good thing, as the strong salty smell, taste, and feeling aren't present. In fact, many consider the water to feel cleaner than traditional pool water.

**Saltwater Pool Tips:** Such pools require a fair amount of maintenance, upkeep costs, and space for your salt supply. Also, because salt is naturally corrosive, you need to be cautious with it if your pool or its accessories contain metal.

### **INFINITY POOL**

Finally, another popular pool option is infinity pools. These ultra-sleek oases can often be found as hotel amenities, but they can also be added to private residences that have a yard with different elevations. Boasting a seemingly edgeless pool that gives the illusion of disappearing (hence the name), this type provides an extra sense of tranquility, style, and luxury.

**Infinity Pool Tips:** Above all, know that they do have an edge where the water disappears; the water merely flows over a clear, coping-free end. Also, infinity

pools tend to be pricey, costing around \$80,000 on average, though prices vary by size and location.

**Whether you opt for a tried-and-true standard like an above-ground pool or dip your toe in the water with one of these more recent versions, having a pool in your yard is sure to add comfort and foster memories for years to come.**



# Say Goodbye to COMMON HOUSEHOLD STAINS

written by:  
NATHAN SMITH



Removing a tough stain can feel like an uphill battle, whether it's on a favorite shirt or the carpet in your bedroom. However, stubborn stains won't stand a chance if you follow these tips.

## STAIN-REMOVAL BASICS

No matter what kind of stain you're dealing with, there are a few helpful tips to follow:

- Act quickly, as the sooner you treat a stain, the more likely it will come out.
- Make sure to follow all care instructions. What works for one material won't always work for another.
- Absorb excess liquid from the outside in with a clean cloth or paper towel.
- Avoid rubbing stains; this can work them deeper into material or fabric.
- Spot-test an area before applying a stain-removing solution.
- Direct heat or hot water can cause some stains to set.
- Repeat the removal process until the stain dissipates.

## STAIN SOLUTIONS

Use these tips to remove common stains from your carpet or clothing.

### *Carpet stain tips:*

**Mud:** Allow the mud to dry before vacuuming the area. Apply a combination of one teaspoon dishwashing liquid and two cups of water, dab over the stain, and repeat until the stain dissipates. Rinse with water before allowing it to dry.

**Nail polish:** Apply rubbing alcohol to a cotton ball, and lightly dab the stain. Alternate between blotting the stain with new cotton balls and clean paper towels. Sponge the area with a damp rag after removal.

**Red wine:** Pour salt over the stain, and then cover it with a plate or bowl so household members do not walk on it. Remove the salt, and vacuum the stain the following day.

### *Clothing stain tips:*

**Coffee:** Mix one part white vinegar and one part water, drench the stain, and blot it away with a clean cloth.

**Food grease and oil:** Apply dishwashing liquid directly to the stain, gently scrub the clothing with your fingers or a brush, and rinse.

**Ink:** Apply plain-white, non-gel toothpaste to the stain, and rub gently to lift the stain away.

## Exceeding your Expectations.



I believe you should get more than what you expect in your new home. It is the little things that make a house the home you love and I take extra care in only showing you the best. Get more from your real estate agent and get more from your home.



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## Front of Tear Out Card 2

### GRILLED SALMON with creamy dill cucumbers

3 c. peeled, seeded, and sliced  
English cucumbers  
1 tbsp. chopped dill  
1 tsp. cider vinegar  
¼ c. crème fraîche  
¼ c. very thinly sliced red onion  
Kosher salt and freshly ground  
black pepper  
4 skinned salmon filets,  
about 6 oz. each  
2 tsp. canola oil  
4 lemon wedges



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## Back of Tear Out Card 2

1. In a large bowl, stir together the cucumbers, dill, vinegar, crème fraîche, and red onion. Season with salt and pepper and refrigerate until ready to serve.
2. Preheat a grill to medium heat.
3. Using a paper towel, pat the salmon filets dry. Brush each filet with ½ teaspoon canola oil and season with salt and pepper. Place the filets on the grill, on what would have been skin-side down, and cook for 2 minutes. Using a spatula, give the fish a quarter turn and cook 2 minutes more. Repeat two more times for a total of 8 minutes. The goal is to evenly cook and color each piece of fish. Flip the fish over and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the grill and squeeze a lemon wedge over each salmon filet.
4. Serve the cucumbers on the side.



**SERVES 4 AS AN ENTRÉE**

Excerpted from *The Row 34 Cookbook: Stories and Recipes from a Neighborhood Oyster Bar* by Jeremy Sewall and Erin Byers Murray, Rizzoli New York, 2021. Images by Michael Harlan Turkell.

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