

WHAT'S COOKING


**in Real
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in this issue:



Create a
Great
Backyard



Tips to take
the fear out of
moving



Home
staging...does
it work?



Trim those
shrubs!



FIVE TIPS FOR A GREAT BACKYARD

Summer is here, so entertaining has made the move from the living room to the backyard. It's the season for barbecues and campouts. Here are five ways to make sure your back yard is everyone's favorite.

1. Make sure there's a place to cook! The way to your guests' hearts is through their stomachs. You could have something as simple as a charcoal grill or as elaborate as a fully-featured kitchen, but it's essential that you can prepare some food outdoors.
2. Lighting matters. At the very least you need enough lighting to keep the party going when the sun goes down. But for a back yard that really pops, add some decorative lighting to walkways, landscaping, or anything else worth highlighting.
3. Gather around the fire. This one's a no brainer. Everyone loves a good place to make hot dogs and s'mores—just make sure you're not violating any neighborhood ordinances.
4. Bring the beach to your backyard. A little water will make everything look better. It could be something as simple as fountain or as elaborate as a waterfall or fish pond.
5. Don't forget the foliage. Trees, shrubs and flowers are all important for adding the finishing touches to your outdoor entertainment space. The trees and shrubs can provide some much-needed shade when the sun is out, and flowers add just the right amount of color.



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THREE WAYS TO EASE YOUR FEARS ABOUT MAKING A MOVE

With low inventory in many markets throughout the country, many homeowners are afraid to sell their homes because they're concerned that they may not be able to find a new one.

This can be a real problem, but if you are seeking to sell—whether to upgrade or find a new neighborhood—there are a few ways to combat the low inventory.

1. Look to buy first - In most markets it is a real mistake to put your home up for sale before you start looking for your new property. Identify the geographic area where you are interested in buying. Even if you don't see anything on Zillow, it doesn't mean you can't or won't find the right home.

2. Think outside the box- Be proactive! Keep in mind that there are probably many people like you who want to make a move but are afraid as well. Have your real estate agent send a letter to the neighborhoods in the geographic areas where you want to live. The letter should be heartfelt and personal while announcing that you are ready to buy a home in that neighborhood. You could find a home to buy that may not even be currently listed or for sale.

3. Protect yourself legally-Each state varies in how the purchase process is conducted. Talk to your real estate professional about adding a clause in the purchase contract for the home you are selling that will enable you to not sell the home if you cannot find a suitable home to buy.

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HOME STAGING: DOES IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



It seems to be universally accepted that home staging will help your home sell faster or for the best price—it's been the common practice in the real estate business for a long time, and on the surface it seems like a no-brainer. Of course potential buyers will be more interested if a home is properly decorated, right? That's not necessarily true, according to a recent academic study. The study surveyed 820 homebuyers by showing them one of six virtual tours of the same property. In some instances the home was decorated with traditional furniture and color schemes, while in others more eccentric furniture and colors were used. In other tours there was no furniture at all, just empty rooms.

The overall results of the study were that staging is unlikely to increase a home's sale price, and that staging isn't quite as important as everyone believes. Of course, real estate trends vary greatly from market to market. If you have questions about staging, talk to your trusted real estate professional.

HEADLINE: DON'T BE A VICTIM: TRIM THOSE SHRUBS

Crime prevention studies show that burglarized homes have less visual access than their neighbors who were not burglarized. Burglars seek to victimize homes with easy access in and out, and most importantly, they don't want to be seen. A common thread in burglaries are homes with overgrown trees and shrubbery. When walkways and windows are covered in green they may look great to you, but they look like "opportunity" to the would-be burglar. When looking at your home from the street, can you see all access points clearly and easily? If not, make sure you trim the green and keep you and your family safe.

