

YOUR HOME

MAY
2011

TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

Grill Master

Few things are better than a barbecue on a warm, sunny day. Keep those burgers and hot dogs coming by keeping your grill in tip-top shape.

The National Barbecue Association recommends that you always start with a clean grill. Break up tough charred food and ashes from the last barbecue session with a metal-bristle brush or a steel wool pad. If the food is still difficult to remove, consider closing the grill's lid and cook on "high" for an additional five or 10 minutes. The grill residue will turn to ash, which is easier to clean off.

To prevent food or ash residue in the future, lightly coat the grill grate with vegetable oil. Two things to keep in mind: always apply oils with the grill off, and never spray directly into an open flame. Another simple approach is to rub down the grates using tongs with a paper towel dipped in oil for an even application. While cooking, try to avoid using sugar- or tomato-based sauces until the last 15 to 20 minutes of grilling time; they tend to cause meats to char.

After you're done cooking, allow the grill to cool. Once it cools down, remove all coals and liquids accumulated from inside the grill. These remnants can affect the taste of future meals and can collect moisture and impede the airflow within your grill, causing it to rust.



Garden Secrets



Growing your own vegetable or herb garden can help trim the fat on your grocery bill — and your body. Ready to start planting? HGTV experts suggest that you consider these tips before you let your garden grow.

Start by making a list: it's easier to plot out garden beds when you put everything down on paper. Write down the herbs you commonly use and look up their soil, light and water needs. Take note of a plant's growing patterns, too — mint, a popular herb, tends to overtake gardens so is best planted by itself. There are some hard and fast rules for growing vegetables as well: Potatoes are known to inhibit the growth of tomatoes and squash, and beans can slow down a patch of onions.

When considering which fruits and vegetables to plant, it's important to remember there are cool- and warm-season crops. Cool crops include cabbage, lettuce and peas; warm crops include peppers, cucumbers and melons.

And finally, size matters. Novice gardeners should begin with a plot no larger than 11' square, which will allow for nine 3' x 3' areas and enough walking space among the crops. Trying to take care of a large garden with little experience can be challenging, but a smaller, well-maintained area is more likely to yield success.

fast fact >> >> >>

In 2010, consumers spent more than \$1.6 billion on hot dogs in U.S. supermarkets.



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The Final Tally

More Americans prefer living in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with easy access to local amenities, according to a recent Community Preference Survey by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. More than half (56 percent) of respondents say they preferred living in a walkable neighborhood over one that requires more driving between work, home and recreation. When considering a home purchase, 77 percent of respondents say they would look for locations that had abundant sidewalks, while 50 percent say they would rather see improvements to the existing public transit system than initiatives to build new roads.

While space is important to many homebuyers, some say they are willing to sacrifice square footage if it means less driving. Nearly three out of five homebuyers (59 percent) say they would choose a smaller home if its location promised a commute time of less than 20 minutes.

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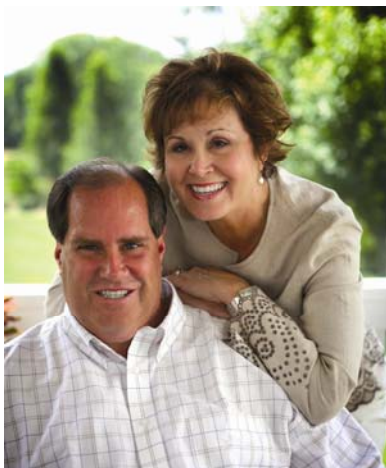
DID YOU KNOW?

Candles are used in 7 out of 10 U.S. households.



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.

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