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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Putting in a Pool? Consider the Facts

Is your heart set on a backyard pool where friends and family drift around in floating chairs while soaking up the sun? Before you dive in, consider the costs versus the long-term value of such a major investment.

Depending on size, design and location, the average price of an in-ground pool can range from \$35,000 to \$65,000. Most insurance companies and/or local municipal codes require a specific type of fence, so be sure this cost is included in your budget.

Aside from their upfront investment, pool owners may spend up to \$4,000 per year on water, heating, chemicals, and maintenance.

Consider these additional variables as you weigh the pros and cons of building a pool.

Value

The addition of an in-ground pool may or may not increase the property value of a home. According to the National Association of Realtors[®], the average homeowner will see about a 56% return on investment (ROI) at resale.

Region

ROI is far better in climates where you can use a pool year-round. If you live in a community where a pool is an expected amenity, you may recover more of the initial expense. But it's important to remember some buyers consider a pool a liability.

Setting

Pools that don't monopolize an entire backyard are more desirable to potential buyers, so try not to sacrifice too much of your green space. Pay close attention to local codes and restrictions, as many communities have specific guidelines for a pool's location in relation to property lines.

If you decide that the lifestyle benefits of a backyard pool outweigh the financial impact, jump in — the water's fine!

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Decorating With Collectibles

Your home can be a charming reflection of your personal interests and hobbies, but there is a balance between a curated collection and clutter. Here are some tips to neatly decorate your home with collectibles.

Display in one room. Limit your collection to one room to give the impression of purposeful design and allow your prized possessions to take center stage.

Show off. Collectibles that are usually stored in a binder, such as baseball cards or event tickets, can be framed and displayed on a wall. If you collect antique figurines or teacups, arrange them on a sunlit shelf or table to give them a natural spotlight.

Add some color. Draw attention to your collectibles by hanging them on a wall painted in a bold accent color. This bright pop of color will add interest to your room and help your cherished items stand out.

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Keep Your Lawn Green With Less Water

Do you wish for a lush lawn without the high water bills? Fortunately, there are several ways to keep your grass fresh and green while conserving water.

Choose Drought-Resistant Grass

Certain types of grass stay green with less water. Consider reseeding with species like tall fescue or buffalo grass. Check with your local garden center for varieties that are best for your area.

Use a Rain Barrel System

Store rainwater by directing runoff from your gutter into a storage barrel. You can purchase an irrigation kit that attaches to the bottom of the barrel, then use the stored water when things get dry.

Keep Your Grass Taller

Longer grass can help lock in moisture, while short grass allows water to evaporate more easily. Keep your lawn mower deck between 3½ to 5 inches high to help conserve water and hold moisture in the soil. Be sure your mower blades are sharp.

Resist the Urge To Bag

An even layer of lawn clippings helps maintain moisture and provides a source of nutrients to keep your lawn green and healthy.

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7 Hacks To Max Out Your Pantry

If a disorganized pantry is giving you nightmares, maybe it's time to tame that scary space. Try these helpful tips to make the most of your pantry.

1. Invest in a label maker. Labeling containers makes it easy to locate what you need.
2. Use clear canisters to quickly spot things like pasta, cereal and baking ingredients.
3. Maximize vertical storage by stacking cans or boxes. Use risers so you can see what's in the back rows.
4. Fill stackable food storage containers with dry goods.
5. Repurpose boxes or baskets to hold small things like snack packs.
6. Install pull-out shelves to make items easily accessible.
7. Use lazy susan turntables to organize frequently used supplies like spices or coffee.

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Sriracha-Lime Shrimp Kabobs

Ingredients

½ cup Sriracha sauce
2 Tbsp. honey
1 tsp. minced garlic
¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
Juice of 1 lime
¼ tsp. salt
1½ lbs. shrimp, peeled and deveined
Wooden skewers
Lime wedges

Directions

In a large bowl, whisk together Sriracha, honey, garlic, cilantro, lime juice, and salt. Add shrimp to bowl and toss to combine. Marinate in refrigerator for 20 minutes. While shrimp is marinating, soak skewers in water.

Heat grill to high and thread shrimp onto skewers. Grill for 2-3 minutes per side or until shrimp is no longer translucent. Serve with lime wedges.

Serves 4

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