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**JUNE 2023** 



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# P HOMES & DESIGN JUNE 2023

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## Turn a backyard into your own relaxing respite

Backyards have long been places to unwind and enjoy some peace and quiet surrounded by nature.

Thanks in part to financial instability brought on by rising inflation and measures to tame it, homeowners may decide to forgo traditional vacations in favor of staying home this season. There's no better time to invest in a home, particularly outdoor spaces, to make them welcoming respites. The following are some ways to accomplish that goal.

#### INCORPORATE A WATER FEATURE

The sound of trickling or bubbling water can make surroundings more serene. A low-maintenance water feature can help to create a calming ambiance. A fountain that does not require a collection pond will reduce the chance it becomes a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Locating the fountain out of the sun can keep algae growth at a minimum.

#### ADD LIGHTS FOR AMBIANCE

Outdoor lighting options include professionally installed, hardwired lights on the home itself or accent lighting that draws attention to trees or architectural structures on the property. It also may include twinkling lights, which some consider a must-have for any outdoor retreat.

Lights come in all types and price points. Hang them on porches, pergolas or cement posts inside decorative planters and then string lights between the posts. This way the lighting can be moved around as desired.

#### LOUNGING SPOTS

A comfortable outdoor loveseat or chairs may be a focal point of the yard, but build in some additional cozy spots specifically for lounging around. Nestle a hammock in a quiet corner of the yard, or enhance a chaise lounge with throw pillows and a large

#### umbrella for napping poolside.

#### ADD LUSHNESS WITH PLANTS

Plants can transform any space. Use a combination of planted varieties around the yard, then enhance certain areas with potted plants as needed. Plants can make an area more warm and inviting, plus they give butterflies, bees and hummingbirds places to stop by and visit. Consider the help of a professional landscaper to bring a vision of a lush, plant-filled retreat to life.

#### BLEND IN THE POOL OR SPA

With some unique landscape architecture, the pool or hot tub can be built right into the landscape, making it a cohesive part of the design. This can make the yard seem even more like an oasis, especially when the pool is flanked by a waterfall or bubbling fountain.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

**HOMES & DESIGN** 

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**above:** Turning a backyard into an oasis can provide the respite many people look for on their properties.



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HOMES & DESIGN JUNE 2023

## Must-have items for summer entertaining in the backyard

Summer entertaining season provides ample opportunities to soak up some sun and have some fun with family and friends. Backyard barbecues and other get-togethers at home are even more fun when hosts ensure they have certain must-have items for summer soirees.

#### FIRE FEATURES

The days when summer hosts only needed a few extra lawn chairs and some burgers and hot dogs on the grill for a backyard barbecue are long gone. Though those items still have a place at backyard barbecues, summer parties have taken a step up.

Fire features, whether it's a standalone fire pit, one built into a patio or a gaspowered fire table, are now wildly popular. Fire features provide a welcome place to relax and converse with guests after the sun goes down. And much to kids' delight, a fire feature also paves the way for some post-meal s'mores.

#### INSULATED WINE COOLER

Coolers are great places to store water, soda, beer, seltzers, and other popular beverages. But what about wine?

An insulated wine cooler ensures wine stays properly cooled but doesn't get too cold, which can happen when wine is stored in a more traditional cooler filled with ice.



Bottles are simply placed in the insulated cooler (much like canned beverages slide easily into can koozies), and the bottle can be kept on the table much like you would for formal dinners indoors. STOCK PHOTOS Homes & Design

Hosts can go the extra mile by pairing insulated wine tumblers with their wine cooler.

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#### **SUMMER ENTERTAINING** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

#### GAMES

Summer entertaining season might be all about relaxation, but games can up the fun factor at backyard gatherings.

Cornhole is a wildly popular game, and customized cornhole boards can help hosts come across as party professionals. Ladder toss, bocce and wiffle ball are some additional games that can make the festivities more fun. Hosts who don't have a pool also can invest in an inflatable pool big enough to fit all the kids who will be coming to the party.

#### OUTDOOR STORAGE CABINET

Hosts can save themselves the stress and effort of walking in and out for dinnerware and other table accessories by investing in a sturdy outdoor storage cabinet. As meal time draws near, hosts will appreciate that all the plates, napkins, utensils, and placemats are already outside. The top of the storage cabinet can double as a small but convenient buffet station for sides that aren't being cooked over an open flame.

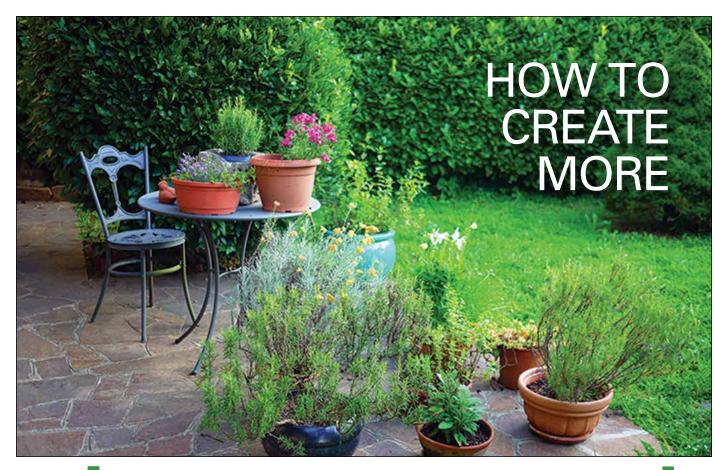
#### PROJECTOR AND SCREEN

A projector and screen can really up the ante on summer entertaining, turning a backyard barbecue into a great place to watch a game or cuddle up after dinner for a movie night under the stars.

Projectors and screens won't bust the budget, but those who have more to spend may want to consider an outdoor television. Outdoor televisions are built to handle the glare of the summer sun, but a retractable awning may be a good safety net for hosts who plan to spend many a weekend afternoon outside watching games or movies with family and friends.

(METRO CREATIVE)





## privacy on your property

An inviting backyard can serve as a welcome retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life. After a long day at the office or an exhausting day spent transporting kids to and fro, it's hard to resist the allure of a peaceful outdoor space in which to unwind.

Privacy is a key component of any backyard oasis. Some homes may be so remote that privacy isn't an issue. But many suburban homeowners recognize they might need to tweak their landscapes if they hope to create a private oasis outside.

#### FENCING OR PLANTING?

Most homeowners looking to create more privacy on their property will have to choose between fencing and planting. Fencing provides immediate privacy because, once it's installed, no one can see into the yard. Fencing also doesn't require watering or other immediate upkeep, which will be necessary when planting to ensure tree roots can establish themselves.

But planting has its benefits as well. Planting for privacy is essentially creating a living fence that can grow over time and provide even more privacy as trees reach maturity. Plants also tend to be less costly than fencing.

The home renovation experts at BobVila. com estimate that fencing projects typically

cost between \$1,667 and \$4,075. However, fencing projects can cost considerably more than \$4,000, especially for homeowners with large properties they want to enclose.

Large, mature trees can be expensive, though it's unlikely they will cost as much as fencing. In addition, fencing requires more maintenance and will potentially need to be replaced, while native trees won't require much upkeep and can last for generations.

#### PLANTING

Homeowners who choose to plant for privacy will next have to decide which type of plants to add to their properties. Evergreens provide year-round privacy because they don't shed their leaves, so these are the ones most often chosen when creating a living fence.

A number of varieties of evergreen trees can do the job, but it's important that homeowners consult with a landscape architect prior to choosing trees so they can ensure the trees will thrive when faced with the growing conditions on their properties. During such a consultation, homeowners may discuss the following popular privacy trees.

• Leyland cypress – The Arbor Day Foundation" notes that the Leyland cypress is popular for hedges and boundaries, likely because a typical tree reaches a mature height of 60'-70' and can spread as wide as 25'. The Leyland cypress grows fast, which may appeal to homeowners who don't want to wait to establish privacy.

• Green Giant Arborvitae – There are different varieties of the arborvitae, but the Green Giant tends to be the go-to option for privacy. The ADF notes that Green Giants will grow up to three feet per year until they reach maturity, providing a fastgrowing option for privacy planters. The Green Giant can spread as wide as 20 feet at maturity, which is another attribute that makes it so popular among homeowners desiring privacy.

• Eastern White Pine – The ADF notes that the eastern white pine, which can reach heights as high as 80 feet, is favored in spacious yards. That's likely due to its height and its potential spread, which can reach 40 feet.

Homeowners who choose the eastern white pine might like it for its resemblance to a Christmas tree, and in fact it is widely used for that purpose. The privacy provided by the eastern white pine is significant, but it might be best suited to especially large properties.

HOMES & DESIGN

JUNE 2023

# THE BASICS OF

Spring marks the return of lawn and garden season. Lawns often bear the brunt of winter's wrath, so spring is a great time to nurse them back to health, and fertilizing can be an essential component of that process.

Fertilizing a lawn can be intimidating. An array of fertilizers, with each seemingly designed to address a different issue, can make homeowners' heads spin when visiting their local lawn and garden center. However, fertilizing is a very simple task that any homeowner can tackle. In fact, fears about fertilizing are often unfounded and can be overcome with some basic knowledge of the process.

#### **IDENTIFY GRASS**

Identify which type of grass is in the yard. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that turfgrass is divided into two categories: cool-season grass and warm-season grass.

A local lawn and garden center can help homeowners identify which type of grass is in the yard, and this often depends on location. Fescue, bluegrass and perennial ryegrass are some examples of coolseason grasses, while Bermuda, bahia, St. Augustine, and zoysia are considered warm-season grasses.

Identifying which type of grass is in the lawn is important because that will indicate when to fertilize. Cool-season grasses are typically best fertilized in early spring, while warm-season lawns can benefit from an application just before especially warm temperatures arrive.

#### SURVEY LAWN

Survey the lawn to identify which spreader to use. A small yard or a thriving lawn with only a few bald or unsightly patches may not need a full application of fertilizer. In such instances, a hand spreader can suffice. For larger lawns and areas, a broadcast spreader is the ideal option. Spreaders have multiple settings, and the fertilizer package will indicate which setting to utilize when using the product.

#### TEST SOIL

Test the soil prior to purchasing fertilizer. The lawn experts at Pennington" note that a simple soil test can reveal soil pH and phosphorous and potassium levels. Soil tests can be purchased at most home improvement stores and lawn and garden centers, and they can help homeowners determine which fertilizer will most benefit their lawns.

#### WATER FIRST

Water the lawn prior to fertilizing. The experts at Scotts" recommend a good watering a few days prior to fertilizing a lawn. Such an approach ensures the soil is ready to accept the fertilizer once it's applied.

#### FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

Detailed instructions are typically provided on fertilizer product packaging. Once homeowners have identified and purchased the product they need, they can simply follow the instructions on the packaging, including how and when to water after application, which can make fertilizing less intimidating.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Fertilizing in spring can help a lawn recover from the previous summer and winter, ensuring it's lush and green when summer entertaining season arrives.







Summer is a season of relaxation when school is not in session, vacation season is in full swing and people everywhere are getting outside and soaking up the summer sun. It's hard to imagine how that can get any better. But it can for people thinking of installing a pool in their backyard.

Pools definitely have a wow factor that's hard to replicate. Homeowners considering pool installation can take note of these factors as they try to decide if a pool is right for them.

#### COST

The cost to install a pool depends on a host of factors, including which type of pool homeowners are considering and where they live.

According to the online home improvement resource Angi (formerly Angie's list), the average cost to install an above ground pool in the United States in 2022 was \$3,322, while the average inground pool installation in the same year was \$55,000. That's quite a disparity in price, and homeowners should know that the average cost of each project is higher in certain regions and under certain circumstances.

Potential ancillary costs, such as excavation and plumbing relocation, will add to the final cost of the project. The erection of fencing around the pool if no fencing currently surrounds the area where the pool will be located also will add to the final cost.

#### POOL TYPE

As noted, above ground pools, on average, require a considerably smaller financial investment than inground pools. This is an important consideration, but which option may ultimately prove the better investment is worth researching.

Homeowners can speak with a local real estate professional to determine if an inground pool or above ground might yield a significantly higher return at resale. If an inground pool is likely to increase property value by a substantial amount, it could be well worth the extra upfront costs.

#### MAINTENANCE

Pools are undeniably fun, but they still require maintenance. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens note that vinyl liners in pools last approximately six to 10 years, while painted concrete may require a fresh coat of paint every five years. Plaster finishes may last as long as 15 years, while cement-coated products can last a lifetime. Pools also need periodic cleaning, and chemicals to keep the pool operating safely and cleanly will require an additional, if somewhat minimal, financial investment.

Homeowners investing in a new pool should be aware of the maintenance required to keep the pool clean and be willing to do that maintenance. And though homeowners typically can open and close pools on their own, it's also possible to hire someone to do it for a relatively small fee each season.

#### LOCATION

A survey of the land in a yard can reveal how smoothly a pool installation may or may not go. Though it's possible to install a pool in just about any yard, some spaces might require greater preparation and preinstallation effort than others.

Sloped backyards, for example, may require the services of a landscape architect to prepare the space, which can extend the time it takes to complete the project and add the overall cost.

These are just some of the factors that merit consideration when mulling a pool installation. A homeowners' best resource might be a local pool company who can visit a home, provide an estimate and point out any challenges that may arise during the install.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Homeowners looking at a pool installation should consider several factors as they try to decide if a pool is right for them. STOCK PHOTO Homes & Design

## CREATE YOUR

### **native plant garden** Gardening is a worthwhile endeavor that

Gardening is a worthwhile endeavor that not only passes the time, but can be a form of exercise and relief from the daily grind. Gardens also provide ample opportunity to experiment, as individuals can produce everything from vegetables to bountiful blooms.

Recent years have witnessed a growing emphasis on eco-friendly gardening that aims to reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides in an effort to protect the planet. One way to do so is to rely on native plants.

#### WHAT ARE NATIVE PLANTS?

Native plants are indigenous to particular regions. The National Wildlife Federation says native plants grow in habitats without human introduction or intervention.

Native plants have formed symbiotic relationships with local wildlife over thousands of years, which the NWF notes makes them the most sustainable options. Native plants help the environment and thrive with little supplemental watering or chemical nutrients.

#### NATIVES VARY BY REGION

Native plants vary by region. In arid climates, certain succulents may be native because they don't need much rainfall to thrive. In lush wetlands, succulents might be out of place.

#### START NATIVE PLANTING

The NWF offers native plants for 36 different states that can be shipped right to customers' doors to help replenish native varieties. In addition, gardeners can visit local gardening centers to select native plants. Small and independently owned centers often feature knowledgeable local staff whose expertise can prove invaluable to individuals seeking native varieties.

It's important to keep in mind that native varieties may look less cultivated than more exotic blooms and foliages designed to sell for their unique appearances. Wildflowers and native grasses may be the types of native plants found in abundance, which may grow up and out quickly. These other tips can help the process. • Plan and prepare the site by removing weeds and turning over the soil. This will give seedlings an opportunity to take root without competition from weeds. Seedlings will give gardens a faster head-start than waiting around for seeds to germinate. However, gardeners can start seeds indoors and then move them outside once they are seedlings.

• Avoid planting native plants in rows, as that's not how they're likely to grow naturally. Vary the placement so the plants look like they sprouted up haphazardly.

• Gardeners can still exert some control over native gardens prone to growing a little wild. Borders and paths can better define the growing areas.

• Grow Native!, an initiative from the Missouri Prairie Foundation, suggests planting two to four species in broad sweeping masses or drifts. Mix grasses with flowering plants. The grasses produce dense, fibrous roots that can prevent weed growth.

(METRO CREATIVE)



## OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO BECOME A homeowner

Despite increased interest rates and inventory challenges, you can still be a homeowner this year.

Many first-time homebuyers may not realize that there are many ways to make home ownership happen, and not all of them involve a 20% down payment.

The need to put down 20% of the cost of a home is a general misconception according to Freedom Mortgage, a residential mortgage lender with experience originating conventional, FHA and VA loans. They are an independent, non-bank, full-service, residential lender whose mission is to expand opportunities for first-time homebuyers, especially military personnel and consumers with low down payments.

One secret to securing a successful loan is to work with a loan officer who is experienced in the wide range of available home loans, especially those backed by the U.S. government. That way, homebuyers are aware of all potential financing opportunities and companies who offer those options.

A good loan officer will walk you through the process and find a loan that

works for your budget. Remember – even if your credit history is less than stellar, or if your resources for a down payment are limited, owning a home is still within reach.

Government-insured loans for first-time homebuyers that don't require a 20% down payment include:

#### VA LOANS

If you are a Veteran – either active military or retired—you may be eligible for a VA purchase loan through the federal government with no down payment.

#### FHA LOANS

A Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan allows for lower rates, flexible credit terms, and low minimum down payments (approximately 3.5%). FHA loans are designed for individuals with lower credit scores (minimum 550) and can be used for refinancing, too.

#### USDA LOANS

United States Department of Agriculture loans help people seeking to buy homes in rural (and some suburban) areas. USDA loans are not available everywhere, but they are an option in many states.

Benefits include competitive interest rates and, in many cases, no down payments. USDA loans have no limits on the loan, and low mortgage guarantee fees. The minimum credit score is 620.

For homebuyers with good credit and finances, a conventional loan may be a good bet, because these loans allow you to finance a wider range of houses than other mortgage types do. Conventional loans also may allow you to borrow more money to finance a more expensive home.

The bottom line is that home ownership can – and should – be available to everyone. A lender such as Freedom Mortgage can help identify the best loan that lets you purchase a home sooner and start to build wealth through home equity.

Visit www.FreedomMortgage.com for more information or call 833-687-1212 for assistance.

(NEWSUSA)

Prospective home owners have financing options, even as interest rates rise. Talk to a professional lender for more information.

## Service Corner



## home and property sales

#### **RACINE COUNTY**

#### **SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES**

#### Racine

nacilie				
• 2916 Olive St	. \$	137,500		
• 2116 Green St	.\$	149,000		
3420 Kinzie Ave	. \$	145,500		
• 1806 Park Ave	. \$	150,000		
• 1616 Villa St				
• 1716 Hagerer St	. \$	152,000		
• 705 West Blvd	. \$	160,000		
• 2840 Eisenhower Dr				
• 1521 Orchard St	. \$	155,999		
• 2621 Gilson St				
• 2400 William St	. \$	165,000		
• 2112 Virginia St	. \$	153,000		
• 2101 English St	. \$	165,000		
• 2033 Green St	. \$	160,000		
• 1729 Deane Blvd	. \$	171,000		
704 Blaine Ave				
• 6820 Novak Rd	. \$	240,000		
• 2612 Virginia St	. \$	250,000		
• 3781 St Andrews Blvd				
• 4906 Carter Dr	. \$	250,000		
916 Orchard St	. \$	287,000		
• 5750 Randal Ln	. \$	318,000		
• 6806 Bay Wood Dr	. \$	309,900		
Kansasville				
• 22730 Durand Ave		291,200		
Mount Pleasant				
• 3545 Wood Rd				
<ul> <li>4025 Wickford PI</li> </ul>				
<ul> <li>2739 Avalon Ct</li> </ul>				
6504 Heritage Ave	.\$	465,000		
Burlington				
• 33300 S Honey Lake Rd .				
• 325 Alice St				
• 372 E Market St	. \$	279,000		
Union Grove				
• 1416 New St		,		
• 1211 High St	.\$	370,000		
Franksville				
<ul> <li>3729 Wild Ginger Way</li> </ul>	.\$	460,000		

- 6806 Raynor Ave ......\$ 740,000 Waterford
- 6809 N Tichigan Rd...... \$ 585,000
- 6236 N River Bay Rd...... \$ 675,000

#### CONDOS

#### Mount Pleasant

- 1100 Prairie Dr 28 ...... \$ 182,000
- 5605 Cambridge Ln 6......\$ 179,900 Racine
- 6906 Dale Dr 17 .....\$ 185,000 Waterford
- 410 Trailview Xing......\$ 385,000

#### **VACANT LAND**

#### Wind Lake

- Lt2 N Wind Lake Rd .....\$ 40,000
   Waterford
- 30830 Grand Dr Lt32...... \$ 60,000 Kansasville
- 1921 Seminole Dr Lt11 Dr \$ 279,000

#### WALWORTH COUNTY

#### **SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES**

#### Elkhorn

- 814 S Eastown Manor -.... \$ 175,000
- 518 N Church St..... \$ 200,000
- N7494 Oak Ln ..... \$ 256,500
- 129 S Eastown Manor -.... \$ 265,000
- W5440 Elkhorn Dr ..... \$ 314,000
- W5987 Sugar Creek Rd ... \$ 365,000 Whitewater
- 305 E Milwaukee St..... \$ 149,000
- 641 E Cravath St .....\$ 168,000
- 728 E Main St...... \$ 239,000

#### Walworth

- 114 Phillips Ave.....\$ 187,500 Lake Geneva
- N3334 Iris Rd ...... \$ 255,000
- N3159 Hickory Rd ......\$ 339,000 Sharon
- 221 Park Ave ..... \$ 175,000



Here is a listing of recent single-family home, condominium and vacant land sales in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties The information is provided through the Multiple Listing Service.

#### Williams Bay

- 529 Free Church Dr......\$ 335,509 Delavan
- 129 S Third St .....\$ 250,000
- 4207 South Shore Dr ...... \$ 275,000
- 5423 State Highway 50 .... \$ 250,000

#### Bloomfield

- N2402 Charles Young Dr..\$ 275,000
   Darien
- 153 Andrea Ave......\$ 324,000
- 153 Andrea Ave.....\$ 324,000

#### CONDOS

#### Lake Geneva

- 7020 Grand Geneva Way 133.....\$ 114,000
- 100 Evelyn Ln E ......\$ 172,000
- 255 Elmwood Ave 204.....\$ 185,000
- W3216 S Lakeshore Dr 4 . \$ 203,000

#### Delavan

- 2206 Landings Ln.....\$ 370,000 East Troy
- 1828 Division St 8 .....\$ 160,000 Whitewater
- 701 E Clay St F1 .....\$ 175,000

#### **VACANT LAND**

#### Genoa City

- Lt392-402 Marigold Rd...... \$ 30,000 Lyons
- Lt0 Church St ......\$ 72,000
   Williams Bay
- Lt7 Lakeview Glen Dr ...... \$ 310,000
   Sharon
- Lt1 Eastview Dr ..... \$ 408,500

#### **KENOSHA COUNTY**

#### SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

#### Pleasant Prairie

• 4315 122nd St	\$ 311,500
• 4278 113th St	\$ 422,250

HOMES & DESIGN JUNE 2023

## home and property sales

Here is a listing of recent single-family home, condominium and vacant land sales in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties. The information is provided through the Multiple Listing Service.

#### Trevor

- 1902 17th Ave ..... \$ 234.000
- 9910 269th Ct..... \$ 389,900 • 12233 Rock Lake Rd...... \$ 495,000
- Salem
- 23806 82nd St.....\$ 185,500 Twin Lakes
- 710 Barry Rd.....\$ 385,000
- 2356 Catherine Ave......\$ 365,000

#### Bristol

• 10210 187th Ct.....\$ 325,000 • 7130 156th Ave ......\$ 585,000

#### Kenosha

Renosna		
• 8559 18th Ave	\$ 190,000	
• 7304 30th Ave	\$ 197,000	
• 2743 84th St	\$ 190,000	
• 7733 Pershing Blvd	\$ 200,000	
• 3107 Roosevelt Rd	\$ 215,000	
• 7938 24th Ave	\$ 240,000	
• 4401 22nd Ave	\$ 215,000	
• 8616 17th Ave	\$ 230,900	
• 7846 30th Ave	\$ 215,000	
• 3914 46th St	\$210.000	

- 7829 15th Ave ..... \$ 233,000
- 7712 36th Ave .....\$ 230,000
- 5512 41st Ave.....\$ 241,500
- 1923 84th St.....\$ 245,000
- 1920 7th St..... \$ 250,000

#### CONDOS

#### Kenosha

- 2825 11th PI 701 ......\$ 165,000
- 1471 28th Ct.....\$ 177,500
- 8055 Lexington PI 702 ..... \$ 191,500

#### **Pleasant Prairie**

6805 102nd St 10DD......\$ 265,000

#### **VACANT LAND**

#### Kenosha

• 5915 60th St	\$ 28,000	
• 3821 7th Ave	\$ 50,000	
Bristol		
• Lt9 120th St	\$ 150,000	

• Lt0 83rd St.....\$ 140,000

#### **RELAXING RESPITE** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

#### ADD SOME MUSIC

Thanks to wireless speakers that rely on Bluetooth technology, it's easy to have music piped right into the backyard. Set

up a wireless speaker in an inconspicuous spot, such as inside a planter or in the rafters of a gazebo.

(METRO CREATIVE)



STOCK PHOTO Homes & Design



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"The bitterness of poor quality lingers long after the sweetness of a cheap price is gone."



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