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Get Your Backyard Beautiful on a Budget

by *homewarranty.com*

This month finds most of us at home experiencing a tight circle of family, and an even tighter budget. Spring is in full bloom. Head outside and get inspired by the warmer weather. We have a few ideas to help you get your backyard beautiful on a budget.

Plant Purposefully

Create a garden in your backyard that is both functional and beautiful. Let your "inner chef" shine through with an herb garden. Plant herbs you enjoy and commonly use in cooking - such as parsley, oregano, basil, thyme, mint, and rosemary.

Construct a Fire Pit

Nothing brings out the family like s'mores over an outdoor fire pit. You might be surprised to learn how easy it is to create your own. With one trip to your favorite home improvement store, you will be melting marshmallows over an open fire before you can say, "pass the graham crackers, please."

Plant a Tree

Planting a tree is a simple and inexpensive way to beautify your back yard. With just a shovel, some mulch, and a tree, you can add something to your yard that will "give back" tenfold. A tree can cut your home's energy costs, maybe increase your home's value, and provide comfort and beauty to your yard for years to come.

Use String Lights

Impactful and purposeful, string lights add a dramatic punch to your yard for the smallest of budgets. The addition of

exciting lighting creates gathering spaces your family and friends won't be able to resist. Here are just a few ideas:

- Wrap strands around trees or outdoor pillars
- Run your lights from tree to tree, or fill a single tree
- Drape light strands beneath an outdoor umbrella
- Line the edge of a flower bed

The Kiddie Pool Grows Up

Take note of a new backyard trend gaining traction: kiddie pools for grownups. The cheap, DIY version starts with a trip to your closest feed or ranch store for a stock tank. What is a stock tank, you ask? Picture your dog's water bowl. Now picture it 8 feet wide, 2 feet tall, and able to hold around 500 gallons of water. Stock tanks are essentially water bowls for cattle and horses. They are relatively inexpensive, sold in various sizes, and are ruggedly constructed from galvanized steel. Grab your garden hose, fill, sit, and enjoy.

Lay a Footpath

Simple, stone footpaths are relatively inexpensive, yet add a luxurious feel to even the smallest of yards. Their practical nature keeps visitors out of your garden, and out of wet grass, dirt, or mud. Choose stones that complement your home's architecture. Also, consider stones with a surface that won't be too slick once they are wet.

Your guests will return to your back yard before you know it. Let them know your time at home was well spent - with them in mind.

June Calendar

June 14 - Flag Day

June 20 - Summer Begins

June 21 - Father's Day

June is Health and Safety Month

Homeowner Tip:



Maintain Your Home's Filters

Your household filters work hard for you all year, so remember to clean or replace filters once a month, or as needed. Check and clean the dryer vent, air conditioner, stove hood, and room fans. Keep heating and cooling vents clean, Keep your household vents away from furniture and drapes.

Power Tools Every DIY Dad Should Own

What does a father cherish almost as much as his family? His power tools. Here are the a few essential power tools every dad should own (*hint, hint*):

#1 - The Power Drill

This must-have power tool will give your dad the freedom to handle a multitude of household tasks, such as hanging window fixtures, building furniture, and installing shelving.

#2 - The Reciprocating Saw

Your dad probably knows this saw by its

Milwaukee Tools brand name, "Sawzall". This saw cuts through most material he will encounter during a remodel project.

#3 - The Jigsaw

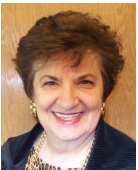
The jigsaw is great for cutting curves or shapes. Unless your dad plans on cutting long lengths of plywood, this is the saw to own. He can use a guide to cut straight lines if need be.

#4 - Orbital Sander

This hand-held sander will help your dad tackle tabletops and other furniture like the polished pro he pictures himself to be!



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Grilled Brown Sugar Skirt Steak

A simple recipe that's perfect for a Father's Day cookout.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 pound skirt steak, trimmed and cut into 4 portions
- 1 large red onion, cut into thick rounds
- Olive oil
- 1 lime, cut into wedges, for serving

Directions:

1. Preheat a grill to high heat. Mix the brown sugar, 2 tablespoons salt, and 1 tablespoon pepper together in a small bowl. Rub into the steaks and set aside for 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Drizzle the onion with olive oil and season with some salt. Grill on each side until soft and darkly charred, about 8 minutes. Set aside.
3. Grill the steaks on high heat until crisp, about 2 1/2 minutes per side. Set aside to rest for 5 minutes, and then slice the steaks across the grain. Serve over the grilled onions with a lime wedge.



Photo & recipe courtesy of foodnetwork.com