

Welcome to Our Exciting ON-LINE SAMPLER!

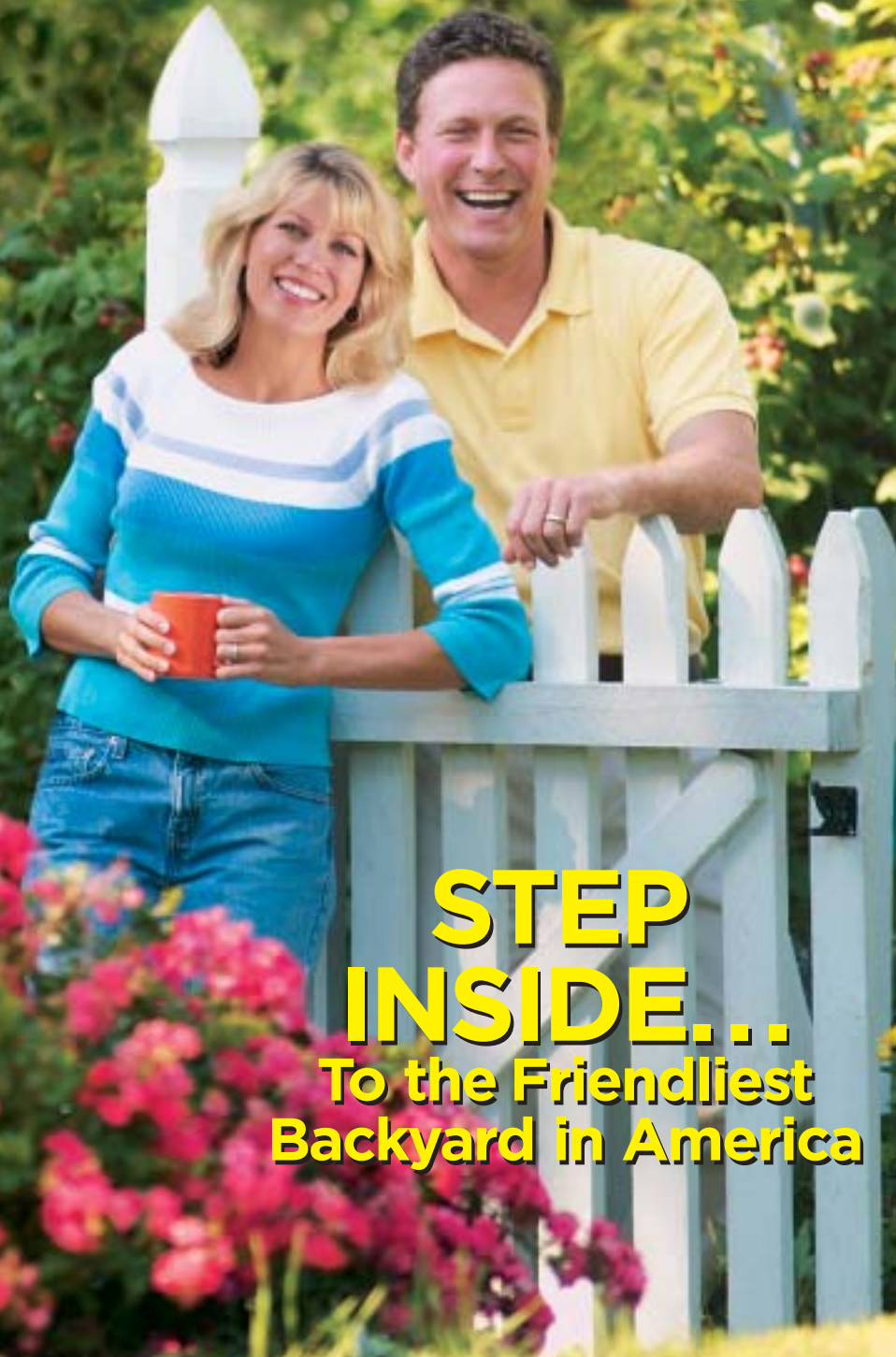
Backyard Living

Elegant
And Easy
**PATIO
PARTY**

**GREAT
GARDENS**
For Small
Spaces

Build a
**GRILLING
TABLE**
In Just
3 HOURS

**STEP
INSIDE...**
To the Friendliest
Backyard in America





Backyard Living

Here's what appeared in a recent issue...



- 6 Gardening 'Round the Old Oak Tree.** This California couple has created a tropical oasis in the shade of their 450-year-old tree.
- 10 Five Tips for a Lush Lawn.** Want that perfect lawn? Everything you need to know can be boiled down to a handful of helpful hints.
- 16 No-Fuss Flowers.** This reader has a solution for time-crunched gardeners...add plenty of maintenance-free annuals.
- 20 Clean Up Clutter...and Relax.** This handy storage bench can be built in a day and may be the answer to clearing off the deck.
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Ready to Improve and Enjoy Your Backyard?

Backyard Living readers share their ideas and advice in every issue.

THERE'S A FRESH BREEZE blowing through yards across North America, and you can feel it with each turn of the page in *Backyard Living*.

Folks are making the space "out back" an extension of their homes. They're creating inviting retreats for relaxing, enjoying family and entertaining friends.

Here at *Backyard Living*, ideas are endless because the first thing you'll notice is the magazine is written by readers like you—*real people* who share ways they've improved their yards.

Every issue is packed with fresh ideas...here are a few—sent from readers across the country:

● **No more pesky roots.** Pat Miller of Piscataway, New Jersey has a solution to hiding troublesome tree roots.

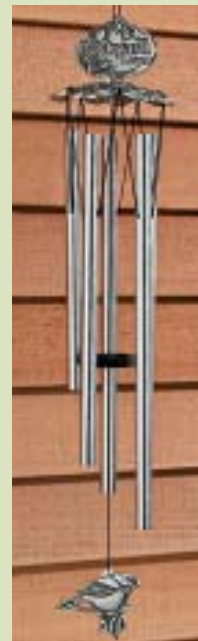
● **Protect your pond from herons.** Sharyn and Jim Richart from Hacienda Heights, California came up with a fool-proof plan to protect their prized goldfish and koi.

● **Rock hauling made simple.** Mary and Mark Williamson of Montezuma, Indiana show how they moved 60 tons of rock!

As you're reading, we're sure you'll want to share some of your most successful backyard ideas, too. After all, that's what neighbors do.

So go ahead and send us your letters and photos. Write to *Backyard Living*, 5925 Country Lane, Greendale WI 53129, or send an E-mail to editors@backyardlivingmagazine.com.

If we use your story, idea or project in a future issue, we'll give you our specially designed wind chime (above). You can't buy it anywhere—it's only available to readers whose letters, stories or photos are featured in *Backyard Living*. It's our way of saying "thanks" for lending us, and other readers, a helpful hand.



RP Photo

...and you'll find these Departments

Just Being Neighborly

Grass Roots Reviews

Hey Neighbor...Look What I Built!

The Plant Doctor is in

Ask Spike

Backyard Makeover

Backyard Breezes

Grounds for Improvement

Find M-itch the Mosquito

Tips from the Test Kitchen

Thrilling Grilling

Grow It, Cook It

Backyard Blunders

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BACKYARD LIVING ON-LINE SAMPLER

We asked readers to put these products to the test in their backyards. Here's what they learned...

Yard Care Products

Neuton Cordless Electric Mower

Manufacturer: Neuton.

Neuton Claims: This is the smart mower for small lawns. It's battery powered, so no more messing with gas, oil and arm-yanking pull-starts. Neuton calls it "the biggest breakthrough in mowers since the invention of the rotary mower!"

Field Tester: Brenda Larson, Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota.

Results: "No cords! This allows greater flexibility than you have with other electric mowers. Unfortunately, the small cutting width (14 inches) made cutting my average-sized lawn

take longer than with my standard gas-powered mower."

Biggest Surprise: "I can't believe how quiet this mower is. You could mow at 6 a.m. and not wake the neighbors! I was also surprised at how light it is...plus it's easy to store."

User Tip: "Buy an extra battery. One battery charge will last about an hour, or just long enough to mow about a quarter acre of grass. If you don't want to sit around waiting for the battery to recharge, it's a good idea to have a second one ready to go."

Where to Buy: Available from Country Home Products, 1-800/687-6575 or www.countryhomeproducts.com for \$380, plus shipping.



Neuton

Garden Products



Fafard Complete Container Mix

Manufacturer: Conrad Fafard, Inc.

Fafard's Claims: Complete Container Mix is ideal for outdoor planters and hanging baskets. This mix drains rapidly, but its water-holding polymers hold sufficient moisture in reserve to carry plants through dry windy weather. The mix is also fortified with starter fertilizer and controlled-release plant food.

Field Tester: Barbara Dunn, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania.

Results: "I've never given much thought to what kind of mix I use in my containers. I thought the health of the plants depended on me.

"But when I planted one container

with the Fafard mix and a second identical one with my standard potting mix, the Fafard container was much greener, healthier looking and bloomed sooner. It also didn't wilt as fast.

"The type of mix does make a difference, especially in the first 30 days."

Biggest Surprise: "The built-in fertilizer produced a more balanced container. Each plant grew at the same rate, with no one plant sapping nutrients from the rest. All this for less work and worry!"

Where to Buy: Fafard products are available at garden centers throughout most of the country. Fafard also produces private-label brands. Check packaging labels or ask garden center staff for Fafard products. For more information, log on to www.fafard.com.



Flowering Plants

White Double Wave Petunia

Supplier: Ball FloraPlant.

Ball FloraPlant's Claims: Double Wave petunias are perfect for the garden or in containers. They'll spread up to 3 feet in just one season and take about everything Mother Nature can dish out. Their easy-care nature makes them an excellent choice for time-tight gardeners.

Field Tester: Liz McCain, Florence, Oregon (pictured at right).

Growing Conditions: Container-grown in potting mix; full sun.

Fertilizer: Miracle-Gro All-Purpose Plant Food (15-30-15) every 2 weeks.

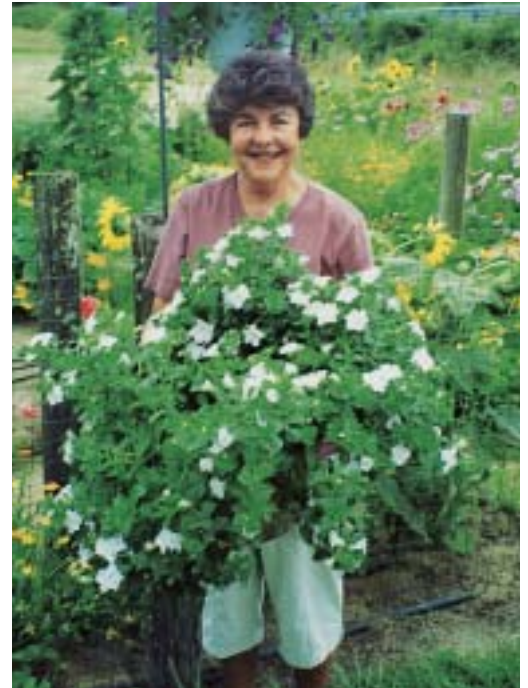


Ball Horticultural Co.

Results: "I think most gardeners would like this plant because it's very easy to care for and makes you look like you're a great gardener."

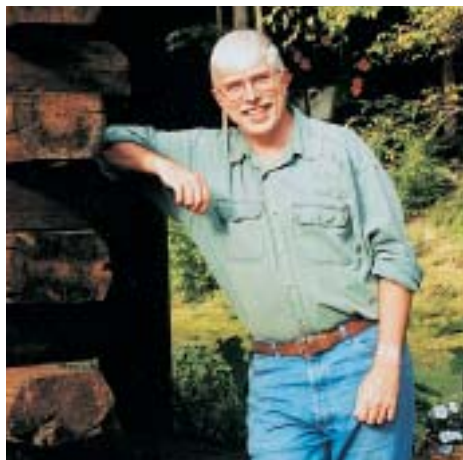
"The profuse double-white flowers look like carnations and are striking against the plant's thick green leaves."

Biggest Surprise: "I didn't pinch the plant back, but it still grew bushy for me. It soon became big enough to place in our wheelbarrow, where I left it to



grow. Now, the flowers are spilling over the sides."

Where to Buy: Available at retail garden centers, nurseries, grocery and discount stores. For more information, visit www.wave-rave.com.



Garden Vegetables

Tangerine Dream Pepper

Supplier: Burpee Seed Company.

Burpee's Claims: Tangerine Dream is too pretty to hide among rows of vegetables. Its shiny red-orange rockets are tasty, too, without a hint of heat. The 3-inch peppers are sweet and delicious. Harvest about 70 days after plants are set in the garden.

Field Tester: Charles Boucher, Antrium, New Hampshire (pictured at left).

Growing Conditions: Peppers planted in full sun in loam soil. Wetter than normal spring conditions, which delayed planting about 10 days.

Fertilizer: None.

Results: "These plants offered an abundant harvest of small peppers (25 to 30 per plant) that can be used in a variety of recipes. Both the immature green peppers and mature tangerine-color peppers are very tasty."

Biggest Surprise: "There were very few seeds in these peppers. They can be eaten or cooked without removing the inner seeds first."

Where to Buy: Available as seeds year-round. Live plants (minimum order three plants) are available from January through May as supplies last. Order at www.burpee.com or call 1-800/888-1447.



Burpee Seed Co.



Great Gardens in Small Spaces

Laurie Morgan turned just 750 square feet into a backyard that's big on blossoms. With these ideas, you can, too!

By Heather Lamb, Managing Editor

It's only natural to have big aspirations when it comes to gardening. But what if your available space resembles a window box more than a grand botanical garden?

With the right plants and structures, even small spaces can become great gardens—whether you're dealing with a modestly sized yard or simply want to pack more pow around a patio. Read on to learn how!

Melinda Myers, the gardening expert for *Backyard Living*, understands this challenge firsthand. She, too, works to squeeze the most out of her small yard, so she has plenty of ideas.

One of her most fundamental tips is to make every inch count.

"In a small area, it's important to plan the landscape in layers," Melinda says. "Look at your space from the ground to the sky and then fill each layer with plants—ground cov-

ers, perennials and annuals, then shrubs and trees."

"You can create the feeling of a larger garden by doubling up on your plantings," Melinda continues. "Mix bulbs with your perennials and annuals with your shrubs. With several different plants in the same location, you'll have year-round interest in less space."

Laurie Morgan of Greendale, Wisconsin says she's always looking for several seasons of color when planning her small garden. Her backyard is pictured above.

"I carefully pick and choose my plants so there's always something blooming," Laurie says.

And although Laurie's planting area is limited to just 25 by 30 feet, she still found room to incorporate a couple of cozy chairs in addition to 24 different types of plants.

"I don't believe you should have a garden without a spot to relax in," she reflects. "It's nice to have a place to ob- ↪

Bountiful Baskets

FOR PROFUSE flower baskets, Ann and Dale Johnston of Thousand Oaks, California sug-

gest trimming back any spindly flowering stems. This causes the plants to produce more compact growth. You'll have lush plants with more flowers.

"You have to be very brave because you're cutting off flowers, but your reward is fuller-looking baskets (below)," Dale says.



SMALL WONDER. Laurie Morgan makes sure every feature has a colorful purpose in her small yard. Even a large clay pot helps hide the garden hose.

serve the yard—even if it's just watching the bees work."

Foundation plantings are a good start, but don't stop there. Containers are a quick

and easy way to add bright flowers anywhere, especially soilless areas like porches and patios.

Ann and Dale Johnston of Thousand Oaks, California turned to containers to transform their long and narrow yard into a small wonder. They edged their patio with 20 colorful hanging baskets and placed more containers on the ground (see photo at lower right).

Drip System Succeeds

Dale then installed a drip watering system, available from most home improvement stores, to keep the baskets moist. The excess moisture drips from the baskets to water the containers below. Not only is this arrangement practical, but the layering packs a lot of color into a little space.

"We eat breakfast and dinner out here every day," Ann says. "It feels like we're in a forest."

One of their favorite flower basket combinations is double impatiens, lobelia and trailing Wave petunias. They also aren't afraid to try new plants in containers, like their hydrangeas that thrive in pots.

Keep in mind that placing plants in containers means they can't obtain water and nutrients from the surrounding soil, Melinda says. Although some extra attention is necessary, she has a few simple tips to reduce the amount of care.

First, select drought-resistant plants and larger pots—this can cut your watering chores in half, to every other day. Another good strategy is to use a potting mix that contains some soil, which won't dry out as quickly as soilless mixes.

For nutrients, try incorporating a slow-release fertilizer like Osmocote into the soil mix. This should be enough to last through most of the growing season.

In the North, it's also important to insulate the roots of perennials and trees for winter. Use pots that are at least 2 to 3 feet deep and 2 to 3 feet wide, and choose species at least one zone hardier than yours. A local nursery can help you make selections.



LOOK FOR MORE SMALL SPACES ideas in upcoming issues of *Backyard Living*.

Thrilling Grilling

Readers share their best
barbecue recipes.

RF Photo

Peppered Rib Eye Steaks ▲

A true Southerner to the core, I love to cook—especially on the grill. This recipe is one of my favorites! The seasoning rub makes a wonderful marinade, and nothing beats the summertime taste of these flavorful grilled steaks.

—Sharon Bickett, Chester, South Carolina

4 beef rib eye steaks (1-1/2 inches thick)

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon paprika

2 teaspoons dried thyme

2 teaspoons dried oregano

1-1/2 teaspoons pepper

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning

1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Orange slices, optional

Parsley sprigs, optional

Brush steaks lightly with oil. In a small bowl, combine all seasonings. Sprinkle seasonings over steaks and press into both sides. Cover and chill for 1 hour.

Grill steaks, turning once, over medium-hot heat 14-

18 minutes for rare; 18-22 minutes for medium; 24-28 minutes for well-done. Place on a warm serving platter; cut across the grain into thick slices. Garnish with orange slices and parsley if desired. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Grilled Sweet Potatoes

I love trying new recipes, so my son-in-law suggested we grill sweet potatoes. Served with steak, they're a great change of pace from traditional baked potatoes.

—Lillian Neer, Long Eddy, New York

2 large sweet potatoes, halved lengthwise

2 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened

Garlic salt and pepper to taste

2 teaspoons honey

Cut two pieces of heavy-duty foil (about 18 in. x 12 in.); place a potato half on each. Spread cut side with butter. Sprinkle with garlic salt and pepper. Top each potato with another half. Fold foil over potatoes and seal tightly.

Grill, covered, over medium-hot heat for 30 minutes or until tender, turning once. To serve, fluff potatoes with a fork and drizzle with honey. **Yield:** 4 servings. ↻



RP Photo

Pizza on the Grill ▲

Pizza is such a favorite at our house I make it at least once a week. The barbecue flavor mingling with the cheese tastes delicious. —Lisa Boettcher, Columbus, Wisconsin

- 1 package (1/4 ounce) active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water (110° to 115°)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt

2-3/4 to 3 cups all-purpose flour

TOPPING:

- 2 cups cubed cooked chicken
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup barbecue sauce
- 1/2 cup julienned green pepper
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded Monterey Jack cheese

In a mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in water. Add the oil, sugar, baking soda, salt and 2 cups flour. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough. Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. Cover and let rest for 10 minutes.

On a floured surface, roll dough into a 13-in. circle. Transfer to a greased 12-in. pizza pan. Build up edges slightly. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 5 minutes. Remove from grill. Combine chicken and barbecue sauce; spread over the crust. Sprinkle with green pepper and cheese. Grill, covered, 5-10 minutes longer or until crust is golden and cheese is melted. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Mushroom Bacon Bites ►

This is the perfect appetizer for most any occasion. The tasty bites are easy to assemble and brush with prepared barbecue sauce. When we have a big cookout, they're always a hit...but they make a nice little "extra" for a family dinner, too.

—Gina Roesner, Ashland, Missouri

- 24 medium fresh mushrooms
- 12 bacon strips, halved
- 1 cup barbecue sauce

Wrap each mushroom with a piece of bacon; secure with a toothpick. Thread onto metal or soaked wooden skewers; brush with barbecue sauce.

Grill, covered, over indirect medium heat for 10-15 minutes or until the bacon is crisp and the mushrooms are tender, turning and basting occasionally with remaining barbecue sauce. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

Banana Boats

This recipe—which was given to me years ago by a good friend—is a favorite with my family when we go camping. It's quick and fun to make! —Brenda Loveless, Garland, Texas

- 4 medium unpeeled ripe bananas
- 4 teaspoons miniature chocolate chips
- 4 tablespoons miniature marshmallows

Cut banana peel lengthwise about 1/2 in. deep, leaving 1/2 in. at both ends. Open peel wider to form a pocket. Fill each with 1 teaspoon chocolate chips and 1 tablespoon marshmallows. Crimp and shape four pieces of heavy-duty foil (about 12 ins. square) around bananas, forming boats.

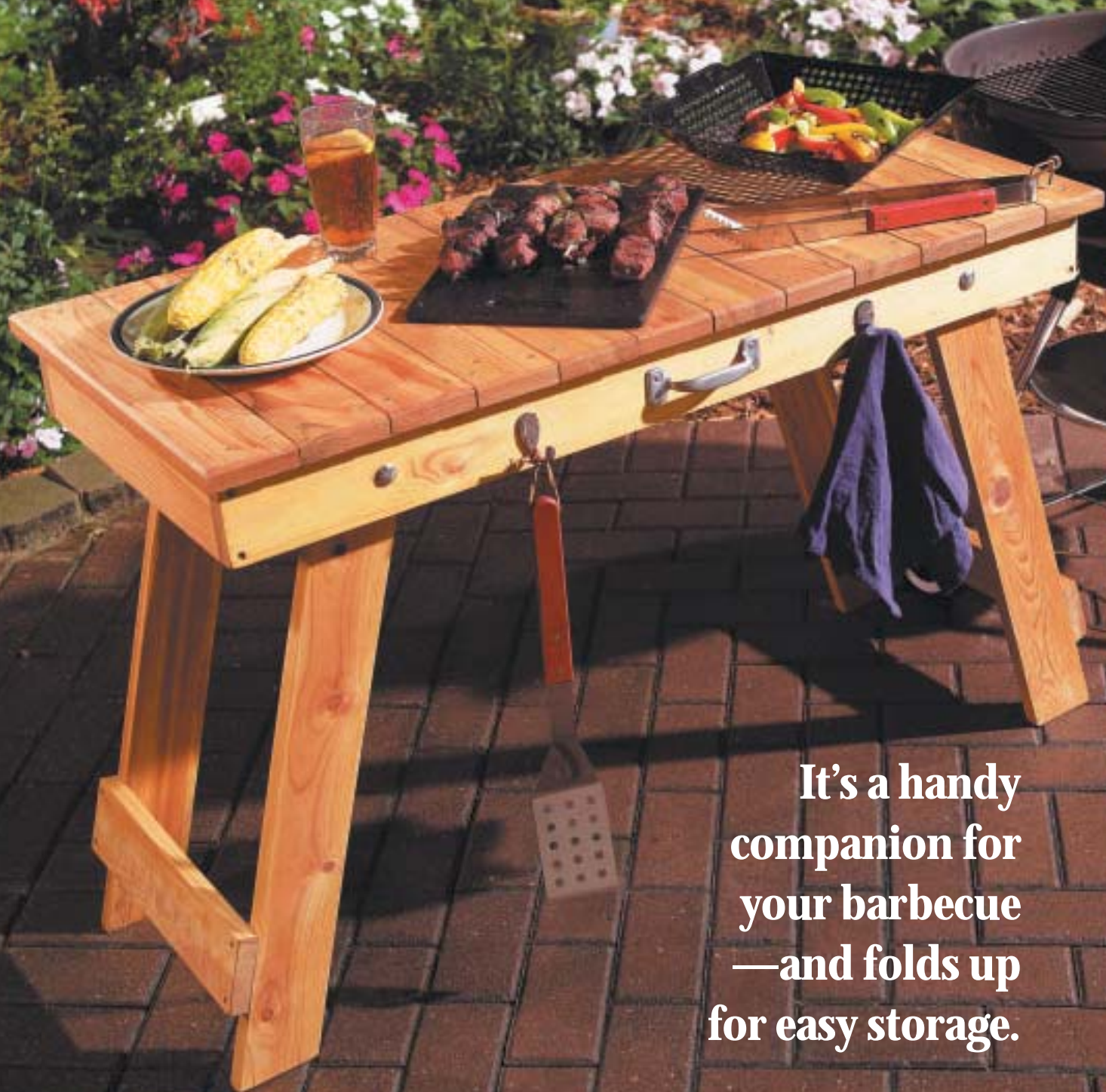
Grill, uncovered, over medium heat for 10-15 minutes or until marshmallows melt and are golden brown. **Yield:** 4 servings.



RP Photo

Step-by-Step Plans for a Grill Table

By Bruce Wiebe, Lakeville, Minnesota



**It's a handy
companion for
your barbecue
—and folds up
for easy storage.**



Photo this page: HGTV, previous page: Bill Zuehlke

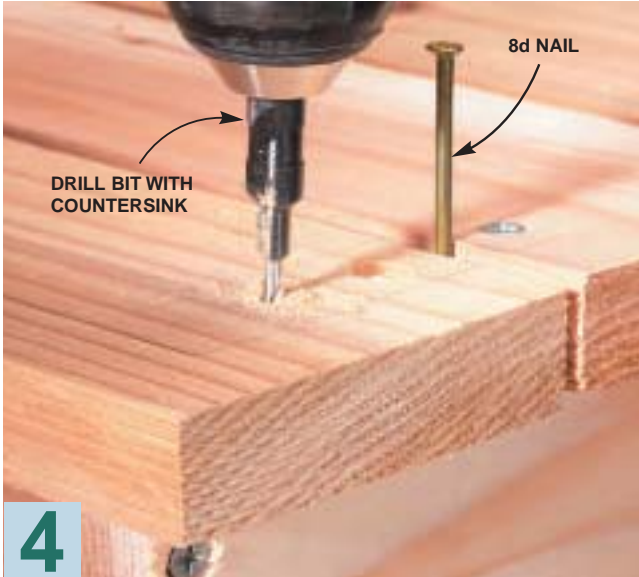


1 **CUT THE BOARDS** for the top and the frame that supports it using a jigsaw or handsaw and a square. (See the exploded view diagram on next page.)

2 **CLAMP** the leg boards together (rough side in) and cut both of them at once to create identical leg pairs. Drill the 3/8-inch bolt hole in the upper end before unclamping.



3 **LAY THE FRAME** on the top boards and lightly trace the frame shape so it's easy to see where to drill holes. Space the top boards with about 1/16-inch gaps between them.



4 **DRILL TWO HOLES** on each top board end with a countersink bit and screw them to the frame. A nail is handy for creating even spacing.

After this collapsible cedar table was built, our family wondered how we ever grilled without it. The legs nest under the top for quick storage or carrying to all kinds of other jobs, indoors or out. All you need to build it is a drill, a saw, basic hand tools, a short stack of cedar boards and half an afternoon.

The table is made entirely from 1x4 cedar boards. Wood quality varies, so pick over the lumber for flat, straight boards that are free of large or loose knots. You can make the table from eight 6-foot boards, but buy 10 to allow for possible

miscuts and to give you more choice for the top slats. Lumber cost? About \$35.

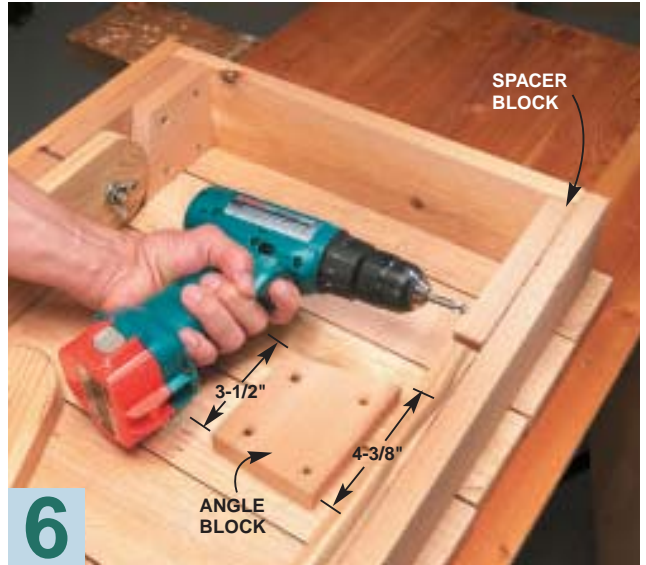
Cut the Parts

You can use a handsaw to cut the parts, but an electric jigsaw speeds up the job significantly. Use a square to help make straight cuts (Photo 1). To ensure matching legs and frame parts, clamp two boards together and mark and cut them at the same time (Photo 2). Cut slats one or two at a time. You'll cut the stretchers after bolting on the legs.

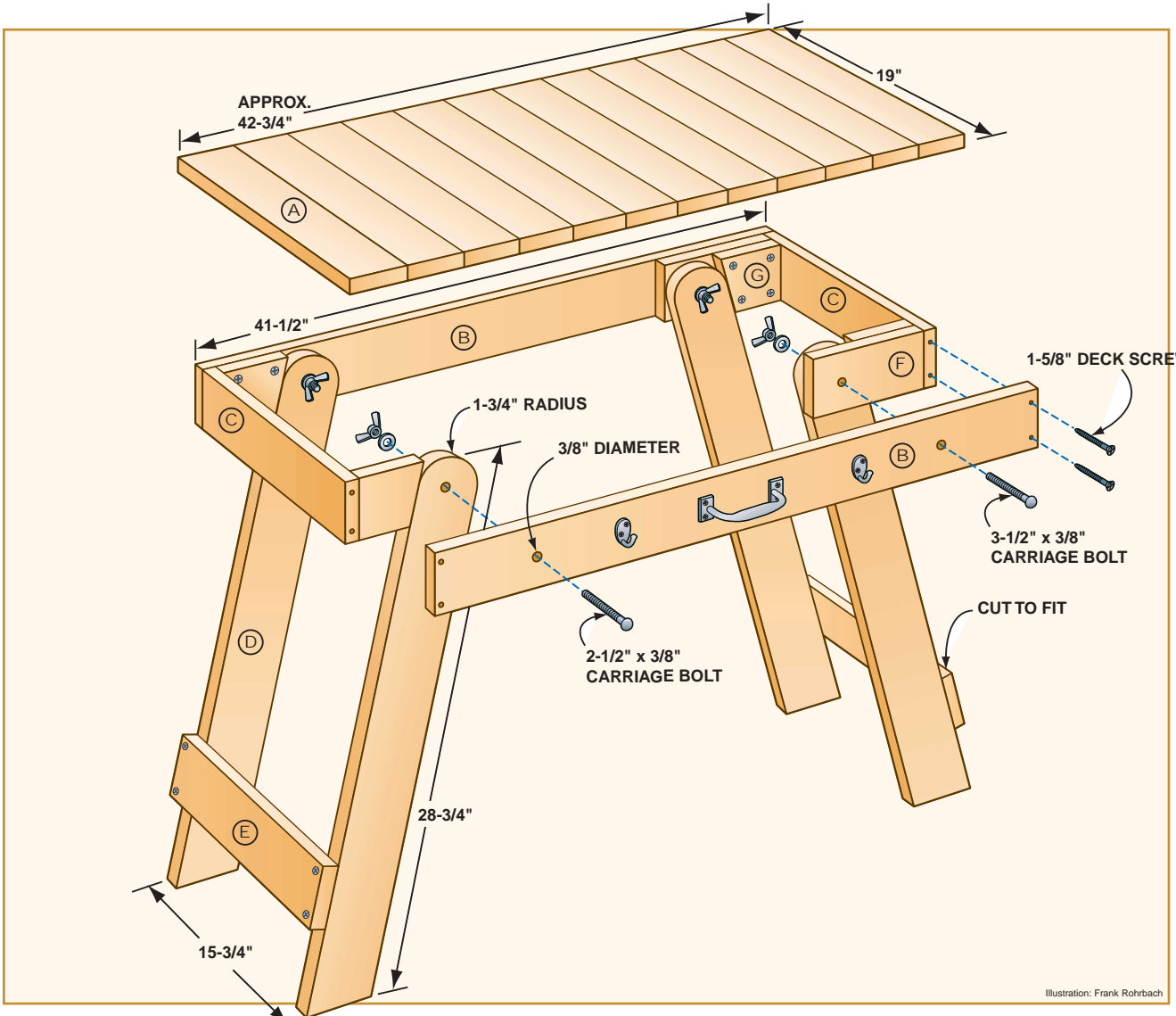
To assemble the frame, drill two holes in the ends of the ↻



5 SCREW A PAIR of angled blocks in one end of the frame, then butt the rounded ends of the legs against the blocks. Drill through the frame and bolt on the legs.



6 SCREW SPACER BLOCKS in the other frame end. These allow the other pair of legs to nest inside the first pair. Then drill and bolt on the second pair of legs.





7 **SCREW STRETCHERS** across each pair of legs. For best fit and overall results, mark and cut the stretchers based on the actual spacing between the legs.



8 **TEST THE FIT** of the legs in the frame by pulling the legs up from the frame. If they bind and scrape, sand the sides for a smoother fit.

longer frame boards and add a countersink hole for the screwheads to nestle into. Cut the slats and place them top-side up on a flat surface (Photo 3). Center the frame on the slats to create a 3/4-inch overhang on all four sides. Then lightly trace the frame shape on the slats with a pencil.

Lift off the frame and drill and countersink screw holes in the slats using the traced lines as a guide. Then screw the slats to the frame (Photo 4). Lightly tap a couple nails between the slats while screwing them to the frame to create the approximate 1/16-inch spacing between the slats. The end slats will overhang the frame approximately 3/4 inch to match the slat overhang along the frame sides.

Attach the Legs

Flip the tabletop upside down and screw the pair of angled blocks to the corners of one end (Photo 5). Butt the rounded leg ends against the spacer blocks, then drill and bolt on the outer leg pair with the shorter 2-1/2-inch carriage

bolts, washers and wing nuts. Now attach the inner leg pair to the other frame, first screwing in the spacer blocks to allow the legs to nest inside the other pair (Photo 6). Add the angled blocks, then drill and bolt on the second leg pair with the longer 3-1/2-inch carriage bolts.

With the legs flat on the underside of the table, measure for the stretchers, cut, drill and fasten them to the legs (Photo 7). To pull out the legs, lift the more widely spaced pair first so the second pair can be raised without catching on the first pair's stretcher (Photo 8).

Sand, Finish, Then Grill

Sand the table with 100-grit paper and, with a sanding block or rasp, slightly round the top edges of the slats. Put on your favorite finish; we used two coats of Penofin penetrating oil finish (cedar color). Pull out the legs, tighten the wing nuts and throw some rib eye steaks on the grill—just in time for dinner!



CUTTING LIST Overall Dimensions: 28-1/2"H x 42-3/4"W x 19"D

Part	Name	Qty.	Dimensions in inches
A	Top slat	12	1x4 x 19
B	Long side pc.	2	1x4 x 41-1/2
C	Short side pc.	2	1x4 x 15-3/4
D	Leg	4	1x4 x 28-3/4 (15° angled end cut)
E	Leg stretchers	2	1x4 x 15-3/4 (Cut to fit)
F	Leg spacers	2	1x4 x 6-3/4
G	Leg stop blocks	4	1x4 x 4-3/8 (15° angled end cut)

(Note: All parts cut from "1x4 S3S" cedar, so each board is a "fat" 3/4" thick and 3-1/2" wide, with two smooth edges, one smooth side and one rough side.)

SHOPPING LIST

2	2-1/2" x 3/8" carriage bolts
2	3-1/2" x 3/8" carriage bolts
4	3/8" wing nuts and flat washers
1	Box 1-5/8" deck screws
1	Pint Penofin wood finish
1	Drill with countersink



Did You Like the Visit to *Our Friendly Backyard?*


Unless you're one of those rare folks who likes to read magazines from back to front, you've just finished browsing through this On-Line Sampler of *Backyard Living*. We hope you enjoyed your visit with neighborly readers just like you. This is just a sampling of the 68 pages of great ideas you get with each magazine issue.

Readers are already planting the seeds for future issues, sending us *boxloads* of mail with fantastic ideas you'll want to try in your backyard.

We're more than a little excited about the great stories to come... easy ways to achieve a lush lawn that'll leave neighbors green with envy...lots of easy projects you can complete in an afternoon...and recipes that are so simple and tasty, you'll want to cook out every day of the week.

Yes, you'll find hours of enjoyable reading packed into each issue of *Backyard Living*. But this is the only complimentary copy we can send you. To see how you can become a Charter Subscriber, just call toll-free **1-800/344-6913**. You can also order a subscription on-line—just click on the burst in the photo.

We hope to visit with you often in our relaxing backyard—and your friends and family are welcome, too! A gift subscription to *Backyard Living* is sure to be appreciated by anyone who loves spending quality time out back. And it keeps on giving as each issue arrives on their doorstep.

So, come on and join your fellow readers in this big friendly neighborhood. Issue after issue, you're guaranteed to enjoy the very best in *Backyard Living*. 



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