

Backyard Basics



Making The Most Of Outdoor Living Space

(NAPSA)—Warm weather calls for a celebration. Whether it's a casual gathering of family or an all-out backyard bash, Ginny Bean—publisher of Ginny's catalog and Founder of Ginnys.com—has some timely tips for getting outdoor space ready for the occasion:



1. Pick furniture that's durable, comfortable and functional. Outdoor furniture not only provides a place to sit and dine, it also helps organize your space. Keep the season care-free with pieces that are water, fade and stain resistant.

2. Introduce seasonal color with plants. Just because your patio is paved doesn't mean you have to go without plants. Free-standing planters are the easiest and most versatile solution.

3. Establish an oasis of shade. Portable canopies and garden gazebos provide a cost-effective option. Some have the added bonus of removable weather and insect screen sidewalls.

4. Add lighting. Make your outdoor space useful even after the sun goes down. Get creative in mounting lights on tree branches, arbors or wood railings. Go "green" with a wide range of available solar-powered accent lights.

5. Create a focal point. In

the same way you would decorate a room inside your home, use yard art to accent your outdoor space. A functional focal point serves double duty. A firepit or chiminea provides a gathering spot for warm conversation and togetherness.

For more practical seasonal ideas or to request a copy of Ginny's summer catalog, log on to Ginnys.com or call (800) 487-9024.

Once your patio or deck is spruced up for summer, a few great seasonal recipes can turn any outdoor gathering into a celebration. This delightfully cool and light summer salad is one of dozens featured on Ginnys.com:

Chicken Yo Salad

- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. sage
- 2 lbs. diced cooked chicken (leftovers are fine, use your favorite parts)
- ½ cup each diced celery and diced onion
- ½ cup low-fat sour cream
- ½ cup low-fat plain yogurt
- ¾ cup cashews
- ½ large package chow mein noodles

In large freezer bag, mix lemon juice, salt and sage. Add chicken and knead bag gently to mix. Lay flat in refrigerator for about 4 hours to marinate. Add onion, celery, sour cream and yogurt to the chicken and marinade and mix well. Refrigerate again until ready to serve. Right before serving, mix in cashews and chow mein noodles. Serve over mixed baby greens.