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## Secure Your Home for a Worry-Free Vacation

The whole point of a vacation is to take a vacation from our worries. Peace of mind is a little easier to maintain if you feel confident that the house you left behind for a week is safe and secure. Here are tips to keep your home safe while you vacation this year.

**Lock all doors and windows:** What could be more obvious? A home security company revealed recent findings that 70% of us can't remember if we locked our doors on the way out. Ensure all entry points are securely locked before leaving.

**Install a security system:** A comprehensive security system can include cameras, motion detectors, and alarms. Most modern systems can be monitored remotely. An efficient security system will serve your home well for years to come, not just while you enjoy a vacation.

**Don't hide spare keys:** Avoid hiding spare keys outside your home. Instead, give a spare key to a trusted neighbor or friend.

**Keep valuables out of sight:** Avoid displaying valuable items where they can be seen from outside your home.

**Be mindful of what you share online:** Avoid posting about your vacation plans

on social media, as this can signal that your home is vacant. Wait until you get back home. Everyone will still be just as envious.

**Inform a trusted neighbor:** Let a trusted neighbor know you'll be away. They can keep an eye on your property and alert you or the authorities if something seems amiss.

**Get to know more than one neighbor:** Yes, that one trusted neighbor is gold, but several are even better. A strong sense of community is an effective way to deter crime. Look out for each other and report any suspicious activity.

**Invest in a safe:** Every household could benefit from the addition of a safe. It's the perfect place to store valuables and irreplaceable items, but is also the ideal place to store your family's important documents.

**Consider a house sitter:** The ultimate in home security. If possible, have someone stay at your home while you're away to provide added security.

**Maintain your yard:** An overgrown lawn can signal that no one is home. Arrange for someone to mow your lawn if you'll be away for an extended period.

**Motion-sensor lights:** Install motion-sensor lights around your property to deter potential intruders.

## July Calendar

July 4 - Independence Day

July 3 - August 15 - Air Conditioning Appreciation Days

July is National Blueberry Month

## Homeowner Tips



### Clean Your Home's Siding

We all know the satisfying sight of a pressure washer blasting away dirt. However, experts suggest that when it comes to cleaning your home's siding, a garden hose works well for most homeowners. Pressure washers might damage the siding or create potential problems by getting water up under the siding. Touch up with paint if necessary.

## Low-maintenance Landscaping Ideas

Many homeowners don't have a green thumb and might feel overwhelmed by the thought of landscaping. Here are a few ideas for low-maintenance landscaping.

**Try alternative lawn options:** You can create beautiful space without grass. Consider a deck, a patio, or a large front porch.

**Add a Zen Garden:** Create a thoughtful and relaxing small garden with rocks, succulents, or native plants. The idea is create a space to escape the stress of your everyday life.

**Add a walkway:** Does foot traffic ruin your lawn? Replace those areas with a walkway. If you don't want to pour concrete, use mulch or gravel for your creation.

**Add lawn features:** Reduce your yard space by adding fun or beautiful features. Add flower beds, vegetable gardens, a fire pit, or a water feature.

**Fun features:** Are your family and friends competitive? Think bocce ball court or cornhole setup.



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## Red White and Blue - Roasted Beet and Blueberry Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds small-to-medium beets
- ½ cup water
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds, toasted
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 ½ teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 ½ teaspoons whole-grain mustard
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup fresh blueberries
- ½ cup baby mozzarella balls
- Thinly sliced radishes & microgreens for garnish

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Place beets in a 9-inch baking pan, add water and cover with foil. Roast until the beets can be easily pierced with a fork, 1 to 1 ¼ hours. Set aside, uncovered, until cool enough to handle, about 30 minutes. Peel and refrigerate until cold, about 30 minutes.

Grind fennel seeds in a clean spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. Transfer to a mini food processor and add vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, garlic, honey, salt and pepper. Process until smooth. With the motor running, gradually add canola and olive oils.

Cut the beets to uniform size, halving the smaller ones and quartering the larger ones; place in a medium bowl. Add the vinaigrette and toss to coat. Add berries and mozzarella; toss to coat. Serve topped with radishes and microgreens, if desired.



*Recipe courtesy of: EatingWell.com*