OUTDOOR ENTERTAINING / AUGUST 18, 2016

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THROWING AN UNFORGETTABLE OUTDOOR MOVIE NIGHT



summer evening. Why not try hosting an outdoor movie night in your own backyard and regain the nostalgia and magic of classic drive-in theaters and open-air movies in the park? Nearly everyone understands the basics of hosting a movie night indoors. However, when you want

here's just something inexplicably wonderful about enjoying a movie outside on a warm

to bring the movie-watching fun into the backyard, it can be a little bit more difficult – but we promise, the extra effort is worth it! We're here to walk you through the basics so that your backyard movie night is as cost-effective and stress free as possible.

The first - and perhaps most important - step of

Pick Your Feature Film

planning any movie night is to select a film. When choosing your movie, make sure you consider the guests that will be attending your party. If you're hosting the neighborhood, choose something <u>family-friendly</u> that will appeal to all ages. If you're inviting friends, classic films or great comedies are sure to please the crowd.

Browse lists online for outdoor movie night inspiration. Are you still having trouble narrowing down your list of options? Poll your guests before the party! That way you can be certain everyone will enjoy what's playing on the big screen.



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You don't need a grassy yard to host an outdoor movie night. You can easily setup your theater on a

Decide Where to Place Your Screen

patio, deck, or rooftop of an apartment building, and in a backyard, carport, or garage. Whether you live in the quiet countryside, the suburbs, or a bustling urban neighborhood, you can get creative with your space.

Screens made from cloths and sheets can be clamped or tied onto patio fixtures, an exterior wall, or

<u>frame</u> with PVC pipe or other materials and set it up anywhere around your yard, rooftop, or deck. We'll talk more about choosing your screen materials later on in this post. When choosing where to setup your screen, take into consideration the amount of control you have over the area surrounding it. For example, bright light can wash out the screen and ruin the view, so

fence. Attach all four sides to create proper tension. Alternatively, you can <u>DIY your own screen</u>

avoid placing your screen near a street light or any other source you can't turn off yourself.

Gather the Equipment for Your Outdoor Theater

After the choosing the movie itself, you need to locate all of the necessary equipment to actually show the movie. While you could haul your TV outside, it's a little bit impractical and doesn't quite

lend the same effect as a projection on a screen. Essential equipment includes a media player, a screen, a sound system, and a projector. In addition to these, you might also want to stock up on

power strips and extension cords. 1. Media Player We'll start with the easy one. What will you be playing your movie on? You could use a classic discstyle player such as a DVD player or Blu-ray system. If you're planning to use a streaming service,

Depending on your projector, certain media devices will be easier to operate. Ultimately, choose

laptop is capable of streaming or playing a disc, which makes it a versatile player option.

what is convenient for you and be sure that it plays smoothly with decent picture quality.

you can also hook up flash-drive style devices available from Apple, Amazon, and other brands. A

The sound is one of the most important elements of hosting a group outdoor movie night. The lack of HD picture quality can easily be ignored for the sake of the experience and ambiance, but poor sound will quickly cause frustration. Guests aren't likely to pay attention to a movie for long if the

audio is too quiet or muffled. Feel free to play around with different speaker options until you think you have the right sound. You might be surprised to find that an all-in-one Bluetooth speaker works as well for your system as a more powerful audio system.

3. Projector

2. Sound System

If you don't already have a projector, you can go about obtaining one for your outdoor movie night three ways: **Borrow** – This is perhaps the easiest option.

already owns one, ask if you can borrow it for the evening. Just make sure it is compatible with your other equipment you don't want to have any last minute malfunctions!

If you happen to know someone who



- even be able to check one out from your town's library. Buy - If you plan to make outdoor movie night a regular event, it might be worth investing in a projector of your own. If you're on a budget, search for used machines on websites like
- Ebay or Craigslist, or check out local vendors that sell used electronics. Of course, you can also do your research and invest in a new projector to get exactly the features you desire. 4. Screen

The screen, perhaps surprisingly, is one of the last considerations you need to make for your movie

night. Outdoor projection is very forgiving. It is able to smooth over most of the imperfections or wrinkles that may be present on the screen, and any that do show will likely go unnoticed. As a result, there are many suitable options for creating a screen in your backyard. Check out just a few of them below: **Traditional Projection Screens** – A screen that is intended for projection is of course the

also be the most expensive. If you're lucky, you might be able to find one used for relatively cheap. Projection screens come in many forms: hanging or roll-down screens, which are typically used indoors, as well as fixed frame or inflatable screens, which are specifically designed for outdoor use. Bed Sheets, Blackout Cloths, and Drop Cloths - Using fabric or sheets are a great way to cut costs on your movie night. Unlike a blank wall, sheets allow you to do front or rear

simplest and highest quality method for hosting a movie night outdoors. However, it could

- projection depending on where you hang it. Drop cloths and blackout cloths are sturdier and produce a better picture quality, but can only manage front projection. Note, when using any of these options you should iron the fabric to create a smooth projection surface. Blank Wall - If you happen to have a smooth blank wall - preferably a white one - in your backyard, you can most likely get away with projecting on that especially if movie night is
- only a one-time occurrence. This is a great way to minimize spending and effort.

You don't need movie theater chairs or expensive outdoor furniture for guests to be comfortable. For a simple outdoor movie night, just break out the folding chairs and spread plenty of pillows and blankets on the

Provide Comfortable Seating

ground. If you don't have enough blankets to go around, be sure to tell your guests to bring some of their own. Blankets on the grass will allow guests to stretch out and get comfortable, while also helping them to keep warm if the evening turns chilly! **Setup the Concession Stand**



backyard concession stand with popcorn and assorted candy offerings for a real movie theater feel. Or get creative with your own baked goods and snacks - whatever you think your audience would prefer!

If you want to go all out on the authentic theater fun, you can even rent or buy a popcorn maker and pick up some fancy popcorn boxes to serve it in. Mix things up by providing popcorn butter and various seasonings so guests can create their own exciting flavor combinations!



make your friends and family thirsty. Fill up a beverage tub with ice and then add your favorite refreshments such as water, soda, juice, or adult beverages such as beer or wine depending on your guest list.

Finally, don't forget the drinks! All that salty, buttery popcorn is sure to

important factors to consider so that your backyard movie party goes off without a hitch!

1. Eliminate Obstacles and Hazards When you're inviting family, friends, and neighbors over to your home, you want to make sure everything is as safe and hazard-free. Make sure to keep cords, or anything else that could be

After you plan all of the big details for your temporary outdoor theater, there are still other

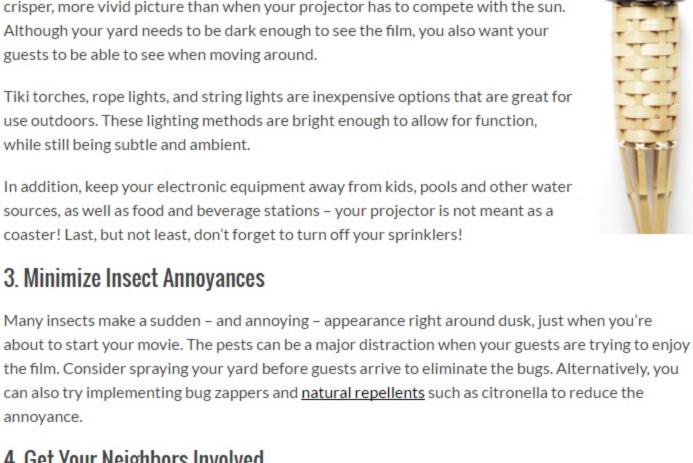
tripped over, out of the way as much as possible. This keeps guests safe and decreases the risk of damage to your electronics. 2. Create Soft Light

Lighting is a key element to outdoor movie viewing. Just like any drive-in movie you've ever attended, backyard movies are best at dusk. The darkness creates a crisper, more vivid picture than when your projector has to compete with the sun. Although your yard needs to be dark enough to see the film, you also want your guests to be able to see when moving around.

In addition, keep your electronic equipment away from kids, pools and other water sources, as well as food and beverage stations - your projector is not meant as a coaster! Last, but not least, don't forget to turn off your sprinklers! 3. Minimize Insect Annoyances Many insects make a sudden - and annoying - appearance right around dusk, just when you're

Tiki torches, rope lights, and string lights are inexpensive options that are great for

use outdoors. These lighting methods are bright enough to allow for function,

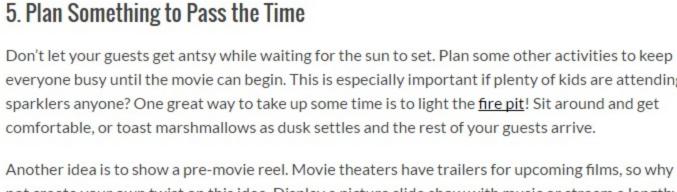


annoyance. 4. Get Your Neighbors Involved It probably goes without saying, but be courteous! If you have neighbors in close proximity of where

while still being subtle and ambient.

you're previewing the movie, be mindful. Don't play gory, horrifying, or inappropriate movies if your neighbors have young children that could catch a glimpse. At least give them a heads up if you're set on doing so - that way they can plan ahead to keep their kids out of viewing range. Regardless of what movie you're showing, it's a polite touch to notify

mild disturbances, even if they don't actually attend.



everyone busy until the movie can begin. This is especially important if plenty of kids are attending sparklers anyone? One great way to take up some time is to light the fire pit! Sit around and get comfortable, or toast marshmallows as dusk settles and the rest of your guests arrive.

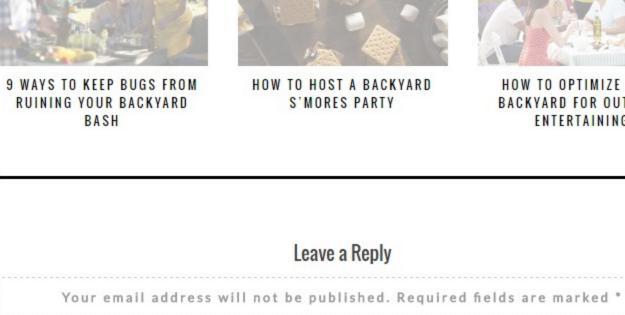
your neighbors so they aren't bothered by the noise. Your best bet is to invite those nearby to your outdoor movie night. It's a nice gesture and your neighbors will be much more likely to tolerate noise and any other

Another idea is to show a pre-movie reel. Movie theaters have trailers for upcoming films, so why not create your own twist on this idea. Display a picture slide show with music or stream a lengthy, relaxing video clip. Not only will it enhance the movie theater experience and keep guests entertained, but it will also help you gauge when it's dark enough to start the film. As soon as the images on screen become clear, it's time to press play!

Lights, Camera...Action!



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