



# SYCAMORE HILL

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Sycamore Hill HOA  
402 Ginkgo Terrace NE,  
Leesburg, VA 20176

## 5 Plants That Help Keep Mosquitoes Away

### Lavender

We may enjoy the heavenly scent of lavender, but critters politely disagree. The best variety is lavandin, which has a high concentration of camphor, which keeps bugs far away.

We'll take a lovely lavender bush over an ugly bug zapper any day.



### Lemon Balm

Its pronounced lemon scent recalls citronella (but in a far more appetizing way). In fact, the plant has high levels of citronellal, a compound bugs strongly dislike.



### Basil

Though it sounds like something your favorite Italian grandmother would recommend, a pot of basil really can help you enjoy the outdoors in peace. It's one of the few plants that emit a strong scent without having to crush the leaves.



### Catnip

Pro: Mosquitoes hate catnip. Con: You will quickly meet your future new pet within moments of putting the plant out.



### Mint

What's good for your mojito is good for your skin. Mint leaves (can keep mosquitoes away, and mint essential oils can help soothe any bug bites you might acquire through your evening.



## 7 Mowing Mistakes Everyone Makes

### Buying the wrong mower

You could be making a whole lot of extra work for yourself—all because you're using the wrong mower. For instance, a push mower slows things down on a large plot of land (over 1/2 acre). On the other hand, in a small yard (1/4 acre or less), a lawn tractor will only get in the way. When buying the right mower for your yard consider the size of your lawn, the terrain, how many trees you need to maneuver around.

What's the difference between your lawn and the one next door? If the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, it could be that you're making one of these cardinal mowing mistakes. We spoke to Greg Weekes, Product Marketing Manager at John Deere, who filled us in on some of the biggest mowing mistakes to avoid. So have a look and see if any of your bad habits is costing you a better looking lawn.

### Using dull blades

One of the simplest solutions to a clean cut lawn is a fresh set of blades. Lawn mower blades wear down with use, just like a razor blade. You can tell when it's time to sharpen yours by looking at the grass blades themselves. Ragged, jagged, and torn grass is a sign the blade needs to be sharpened. Weekes recommends keeping a second set of mower blades in the garage and taking the dull set to a specialist to sharpen so you'll never have to wait to mow.

### Cutting a wet lawn

After a rainstorm, there are often plenty of tasks to do around the yard but mowing the lawn shouldn't be one of them. Not only can wet grass be slick (not ideal for mowing), the moist clippings are more likely to stick to and clog your mower. One of the best ways to eliminate the need to mow a wet lawn is to watch the forecast and mow ahead of schedule. If you normally mow on Saturdays but you're in for a rainy weekend, give the grass a haircut on Thursday or Friday, instead.

### Not mowing enough

Want to keep your lawn looking luxurious all summer long? Then cut it and cut it often. For the strongest, healthiest grass, you'll want to cut no more than one third off the top each time you mow. That means adjusting the blade height when necessary and never allowing the grass to grow too long. For most regions, mowing every few days in the summertime is just about the right amount.

### Not cleaning the mower

Everyone knows that you're supposed to clean the underside of a mower after use—but many folks let this little chore slide. However, when you do just that you're actively shortening the life of your machine. Not only do clippings block proper airflow necessary for mulching or bagging clippings, but moisture and fertilizer traces can corrode the deck of the mower, causing premature rust and wear.

### Ignoring the maintenance manual

If you treat your mower well it will return the favor. Consult your manual to determine how often you need to change the oil and filters. This simple bit of maintenance will do wonders for improving performance, extending the

life of the mower, and making for a smoother running machine. Mark reminders on your calendar so you don't miss a crucial tune up.

### Improper off-season storage

The last thing anyone wants come springtime is finding that the mower won't start because of sticky, separated fuel in the tank. Not only is it frustrating to deal with, it's not great for the mower. Be sure to add fuel stabilizer to the tank before you stow it away for the season. Take a tip from Weekes and run the mower for 10-15 minutes before park it in the shed.

## 7 Real Reasons to Consider Fake Grass

### Water Woes

Watering lawns costs a lot of cash—up to \$200 per month per acre. Not only that, but dwindling water supplies and the resulting restrictions in many areas of the country mean there's not much to waste on thirsty lawns. Here's where artificial turf offers a solution: For every square foot of natural grass replaced, 55 gallons of water can be saved every year. That means you'll still get the lush, green look you want, all while conserving valuable water resources.



Is your lawn getting to be a real pain in the... grass? If your relaxing weekends have been supplanted by the never-ending work of mowing, fertilizing, watering, and weeding, it may be time to consider artificial turf. This isn't the Astroturf of the old days—today's “fake” grass has come a long way. There are many options available that replicate lush natural grasses, such as Kentucky bluegrass, rye grass, and fescue. Artificial turf is becoming a viable and increasingly popular

landscaping choice—but is it right for you? Here are just a few grass facts to help you answer that very question.

### Allergen Abatement

One of the most common culprits of severe seasonal allergies? You guessed it: grass. Runny noses, itchy eyes, and coughing go hand in hand with lawn care for those who suffer from grass allergies. An artificial lawn eliminates the allergens, leaving you free to breathe easier without having to pop a handful of allergy pills.

### Tough Stuff

Small kids love running, jumping, and digging outdoors, which is all fun and games until the lawn starts looking ragged and patchy. For those with dogs, the damage can be even more severe, as pet waste is toxic to most grass varieties. Instead of struggling to grow a lawn under such tough conditions, consider synthetic grass, which will always look lush and provide a soft and cushy surface for tiny toes.

### Staying Green

Maybe you've heard that a truly green household is a grass-free one. There's certainly something to that notion. Artificial turf has a positive impact on the environment by eliminating the need for toxic pesticides and avoiding the potential harm that can result from over fertilizing lawns. Fake lawns also cut down on yard waste, because no mowing means no grass clippings to cart to the curb for trash pickup. In addition, artificial grass is made from many recycled materials, such as old rubber tires, which would have otherwise been destined for the landfill.

### No Sun, No Problem

A peaceful tree-lined street is a beautiful thing—but trying to grow grass in all that shade? Not so much. Even so-called “shade-tolerant” grass varieties are difficult to grow under trees or near shaded foundations. That's never a problem with artificial turf. Not only can you install this “lawn” in shady corners of your yard, but it also works in nontraditional areas, such as rocky slopes or sandy soil.

### No More Mowing

Traditional lawns require an army of tools for maintenance, including mowers, edgers, sprinklers, spreaders, and so much more. Once you install an artificial lawn, however, you can say goodbye to all that gear and free up much-needed space in your garage or shed.

## Hot Weather Tips for Your Pet

We all love spending the long, sunny days of summer outdoors with our furry companions, but being overeager in hot weather can spell danger, warn ASPCA experts.

"Even the healthiest [pets](#) can suffer from dehydration, heat stroke and sunburn if overexposed to the heat," says Dr. Lila Miller, ASPCA Veterinary Advisor, "and heat stroke can be fatal if not treated promptly."

Take these simple precautions, provided by ASPCA experts, to help prevent your [pet](#) from overheating. And if you suspect your pet is suffering from heat stroke, get help from your veterinarian immediately.

### Visit the Vet

A visit to the veterinarian for a spring or early summer check-up is a must. Make sure your pets get tested for [heartworm](#) if they aren't on year-round preventive medication. Do parasites bug your animal companions? Ask your doctor to recommend a safe [flea and tick control](#) program.

### Made in the Shade

Pets can get [dehydrated](#) quickly, so give them plenty of fresh, clean water when it's hot outdoors. Make sure your pets have a shady place to get out of the

sun, be careful to not [over-exercise](#) them, and keep them indoors when it's extremely hot.

### Know the Warning Signs

According to Dr. Lila Miller, "symptoms of overheating in pets include excessive panting or difficulty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, drooling, mild weakness, stupor or even collapse. They can also include seizures, bloody diarrhea and vomit along with an elevated body temperature of over 104 degrees." Animals with flat faces, like Pugs and Persian cats, are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively. These pets, along with the elderly, the overweight, and those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept cool in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible.

### No Parking!

Never leave your animals alone in a parked vehicle. "On a hot day, a parked car can become a furnace in no time—even with the windows open—which could lead to fatal heat stroke," says Dr. Louise Murray, Director of Medicine at ASPCA Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital. Also, leaving pets unattended in cars in extreme weather is illegal in several states.

### Make a Safe Splash

Do not leave pets unsupervised around a pool—not all dogs are good swimmers. Introduce your pets to water gradually and make sure they wear [flotation devices](#) when on boats. Rinse your [dog](#) off after swimming to remove chlorine or salt from his fur, and try to keep your dog from drinking pool water, which contains chlorine and



other chemicals that could cause stomach upset.

### Screen Test

"During warmer months, the ASPCA sees an increase in injured animals as a result of [High-Rise Syndrome](#), which occurs when pets—mostly cats—fall out of windows or doors and are seriously or fatally injured," says Dr. Murray. "Pet owners need to know that this is completely preventable if they take simple precautions." Keep all unscreened windows or doors in your home closed and make sure adjustable screens are tightly secured.

### Summer Style

Giving your dog a lightweight summer haircut helps prevent overheating. Shave down to a one-inch length, never to the skin, so your dog still has some protection from the sun. Brushing cats more often than usual can prevent problems caused by excessive heat. As far as skin care, be sure that any sunscreen or insect repellent product you use on your pets is labeled specifically for use on animals.

## Kid's Corner



You must know by now that Macaroni Kid is fond of special days and their fun facts! Read on for some fun and interesting facts about the Fourth of July and a couple of silly jokes to get the kids giggling.

- Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national animal but was out-voted when John Adams and Thomas Jefferson chose the bald eagle.

- Over an estimated 150 million hot dogs will be consumed on July 4th. That's roughly one hot dog for every two people in the U.S.
- The first Fourth of July party was held at the White House in 1801.
- The words "under God" were not added to the Pledge of Allegiance until the year 1954.
- More than 74 million Americans will BBQ on July 4th.
- The Fourth of July was not declared a national holiday until 1941.
- The national anthem is actually set to the tune of an old English drinking song called To Anacreon in Heaven.
- The stars on the original American flag were arranged in a circle to ensure that all colonies were represented equally.
- Three U.S. presidents have died on July 4th: Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence; five years later, James Monroe died on July 4, 1831.
- Calvin Coolidge is the only U.S. president born on the 4th of July. He was born in 1872.
- Marie Curie, the only woman to win two Nobel Prizes and the only person to win two in two different science fields, died on July 4, 1934.

## Upcoming Events in the Area

### Movie Night at the Pool

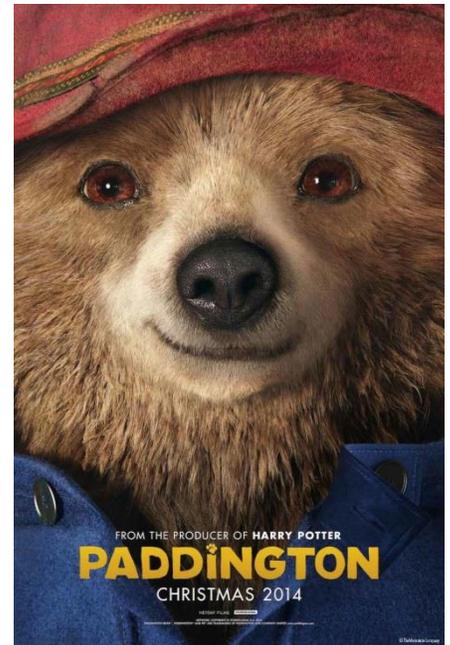
**Where:** Sycamore Hill HOA Pool

**When:** Saturday, July 18th

**Raindate:** Sunday, July 19th

**Time:** Dusk

Come join your neighbors and friends for a movie on the bigscreen under the stars! Bring a picnic dinner & beverages to enjoy poolside while watching Paddington. We will be serving popcorn and some candy.



### National Night Out 2015

**Where:** Sycamore Hill HOA Onsite Office Front

**When:** Tuesday, August 4, 2015

**Time:** 6PM

What is National Night Out?

National Association of Town Watch is the nation's premiere non-profit crime prevention organization dedicated to the development and promotion of crime prevention in communities across the nation.

NATW is a network of law enforcement agencies, neighborhood watch groups, civic groups, state and regional crime prevention associations and concerned citizens. Through that network, NATW was able to launch the annual National Night Out campaign.

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods a safer, better place to live. Together, we are making that happen.

National Night Out enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community and provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances.

Come join your friends and neighbors at Sycamore Hill HOA for a great evening of fun and chance to get to know everyone with some great activities~!



### BBQ & Bluegrass at Breaux

**Where:** Breaux Vineyards  
**Address:** 36888 Breaux Vineyards Lane Purcellville, Virginia 20132  
**When:** Saturday, August 8, 2015  
**Time:** 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM  
**Phone:** 540-668-6299  
 Say farewell to summer with a relaxing and fun-filled afternoon at Breaux Vineyards on Saturday August 8th 2015 from 11am-6pm. Experience our 4th

Annual BBQ & Bluegrass with wine tastings, BBQ, craft vendors, and live bluegrass music all day long.

No admission fee or reservation required. Event is rain or shine, so come join us whatever the weather.

Dogs allowed outside, as long as they are on a leash.

Limited seating- lawn chairs and blankets recommended. We look forward to seeing you there!

<http://www.breauxvineyards.com>

**Admission Fee:** No admission fee; \$10 wine tasting



### The Lucketts Fair

**Where:** Lucketts Community Center  
**Address:** 42361 Lucketts Road Leesburg, Virginia 20176  
**When:** Saturday, August 15, 2015  
 Sunday, August 16, 2015  
**Time:** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
**Phone:** 703-771-5281

Re-Discover The Lucketts Fair, a family friendly event which honors Lucketts' agrarian roots. Enjoy Bluegrass music all weekend under the gazebo, thrill at the Border Collies herding sheep, take a load off and ride a horse drawn hayride, let the little ones loose in the hay maze, squish grapes between your toes in the grape stomp, dominate the mechanical bull, visit with authors in the Reader's Garden, shop at the juried crafters and artisans, explore for antiques, refuel on great fair food, squeeze some apple cider and so much more!

Visit with local non-profit organizations to learn about ways they give to the Lucketts community. Groups including The Journey Through Hallowed Ground, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, Equine Rescue League, Loudoun Beekeepers among others demonstrate their missions through activities.

Join in the fun by entering the Best Fruit Pie and other contests. Don't miss the cake walk. Winners take home a homemade cake. The Bakery is back and beckons you into the Old School auditorium for freshly baked goodies and a cup of knock your socks off coffee.

Bring the entire family, young, old and everyone in between. Stay the weekend, each day offers new country flavored delights.

**Admission Fee:** \$5 admission. Children under 6 free.



### Waterford Fair

**Where:** The Waterford Village  
**Address:** 40183 Main Street Waterford, Virginia 20197  
**When:** Friday, October 2, 2015  
 Saturday, October 3, 2015  
 Sunday, October 4, 2015  
**Time:** 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
**Phone:** 540-882-3018

The Tour Houses have been selected, entertainment lined up, food purveyors chosen, and artisans' locations put on the map. Get ready for the oldest-and best!-juried crafts fair in Virginia.

# SYCAMORE HILL

The historic village of Waterford welcomes fairgoers from around the world each October for three days of living history, food, handicrafts, and just plain fun.

Friends and families, adults and children all delight in lively performances of traditional music and dance; reenactments by Colonial and Civil War-era militia and cavalry and historical interpretations of historic village life; hands-on demonstrations of traditional American crafts by 155 renowned artisans (many nationally known), art and photography exhibits, plus the ever-popular tour of private historic homes.

It is entertainment with a purpose: the historic crafts demonstrated, the music played, the



military reenactors, and, of course, the setting in this beautifully preserved National Historic Landmark District—

all bring alive the history of an early American village for children of all ages.

## Loudoun County Fair

**Where:** Loudoun County Fairgrounds  
**Address:** 17558 Dry Mill Road Leesburg, Virginia 20175  
**When:** Saturday, July 25, 2015 - Saturday, August 1, 2015  
**Time:** see website  
**Website:** www.loudouncountyfair.com

Experience a true country fair featuring 4-H animals, crafts, carnival rides,

entertainment, food, livestock auctions, professional bull riding, and a mini demolition derby. Enjoy a carnival, children's activities, educational demonstrations, a pet show, vendors, kiss-a-pig contest, and much more!

Admission Fee: Full ticket listing can be found at;  
<http://loudouncountyfair.com/tickets>.



## Summer BBQ – Poolside

**Where:** Sycamore Hill HOA Pool  
**When:** Saturday, August 22, 2015  
**RAIN OR SHINE**  
**Time:** 4PM to 6PM  
Come have some ole fashioned BBQ poolside with your friends and neighbors in the neighborhood!

Menu to include: Pulled pork and chicken BBQ, Baked beans, Potato Salad, Macaroni & cheese, Homemade pecan & apple pies.

Food provided by Carolina Brothers Pit Barbeque (Ashburn, Virginia)



## Word Search

# Fourth of July

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid.  
The words may be hidden in any direction.

N L I S G D Y R O T S I H A G I  
L B R T A D W V G C M N P N T N  
A N T R H M Q E D F O R A R E F  
V D I E Q P E E D I N T C H C I  
I U G A D A M R T A I Y L G N R  
N B X M T O U A I O R L J A E E  
R X V E C I R D N C A A M L D W  
A Y Y R I B R A E B A I P F N O  
C Z A S E U L B E T I H W D E R  
Y C B L V A Z S T U F H S J P K  
Y M E S N A A I K A C G Y X E S  
R C W T V B L Z H N E E I B D Z  
I B H B Y A D I L O H R B A N F  
C E P A T R I O T I S M G R I U  
M U U I P Z F R E E D O M L A E  
S N O O L L A B L C I N C I P B

AMERICA	FIREWORKS	NATIONAL ANTHEM
BALLOONS	FLAG	PARADE
BARBECUE	FREEDOM	PATRIOTISM
BASEBALL	GREAT BRITAIN	PICNIC
CARNIVAL	HISTORY	RED WHITE BLUE
CELEBRATION	HOLIDAY	STREAMERS
DEMOCRACY	INDEPENDENCE	

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