

# Be safe in your own backyard this summer

Blue skies and warm sunshine lure us outdoors on weekends faster than you can say "barbecue." But even in our own backyards, it makes sense to keep safety on our minds all summer.

Accidents can and do happen to anyone, so it's worth being aware of the potential hazards that may be lurking out there in the garden.

Young children love the sense of freedom they get from being outdoors, and they'll make the most of their opportunity to explore new surroundings. But their inquisitiveness will lead them to examine the single sliver of glass left from a beer mug broken last summer, or to the injured bee waiting to make one last sting.

Crawling babies will eat used matches and barbecue briquettes and tuff handfuls of herbicide-treated grass in their mouths without a second thought. They'll want to check out the paddling pool, or even the bottom of a water filled bucket.

Toddlers love to pick the leaves of plants, a surprising number of which from rose leaves

to privet to azaleas are poisonous, and have the potential to be fatal if consumed in any quantity.

Toys too can be hazardous to your health. A ball or skateboard left unattended can trip up the most sure footed among us.

Children will also find all kinds of things to do with a screwdriver, or the hammer and nails you forgot to put away. They'll play with any piece of wood or garden tool left lying around, and although spades and rakes might be great play things to them, the damage they can do with a single swipe can be deadly. Tetanus is extremely rare these days thanks to routine immunization, but it can still kill.

Older kids might be tempted to experiment with matches and lighter fluid, or try out the power saw that's still plugged in. The more rambunctious can get carried away with racing around a slippery deck and doing dive bombs into a swimming pool full of other kids.

Adults and children alike can suffer from the effects of midday sun pounding down on

unprotected skin or a hatless head.

Here are a few suggestions to make summertime safer in your backyard:

- If you're doing any work around the yard, tidy up as soon as you've finished. Unless you're actually using and keeping an eye on things like garden tools, lawn and plant chemicals, power tools, a ladder, barbecue lighter fluid and matches, put them safely out of harm's way.

- For outdoor entertaining, use unbreakable plastic or heavy paper plates and cups to prevent broken glass from findings its way into the lawn. Don't leave empty bottles lying around.

- Children and adults can avoid painful cuts, stings and scraped by wearing sandals or light rubber shoes whenever they're outside. And everyone, but particularly babies and young children, should be well protected from the sun's harmful rays. Wear a hat, and slap on plenty of sunscreen.

- Never leave small children unattended, even for a minute. It takes less time than that for accidents to happen. Your children should also know never to leave the yard, even to retrieve a fly away frisbee without letting you know what they're doing.

- Keep a well-stocked first-aid kit on hand to heal with minor injuries. With gardens containing so many potentially poisonous plants, it's wise to know the number of your local poison control centre just in case your child

swallows anything that might be dangerous.

- Treat barbecues with care. Make sure they're always supervised, particularly if there are children and pets playing around the yard.

- Don't drink excessively while you're sitting out in the sunshine. Too many beers on a sunny afternoon can make you less attentive where children are concerned, and slower to react to any emergency. Alcohol and swimming pools are always a dangerous combination.

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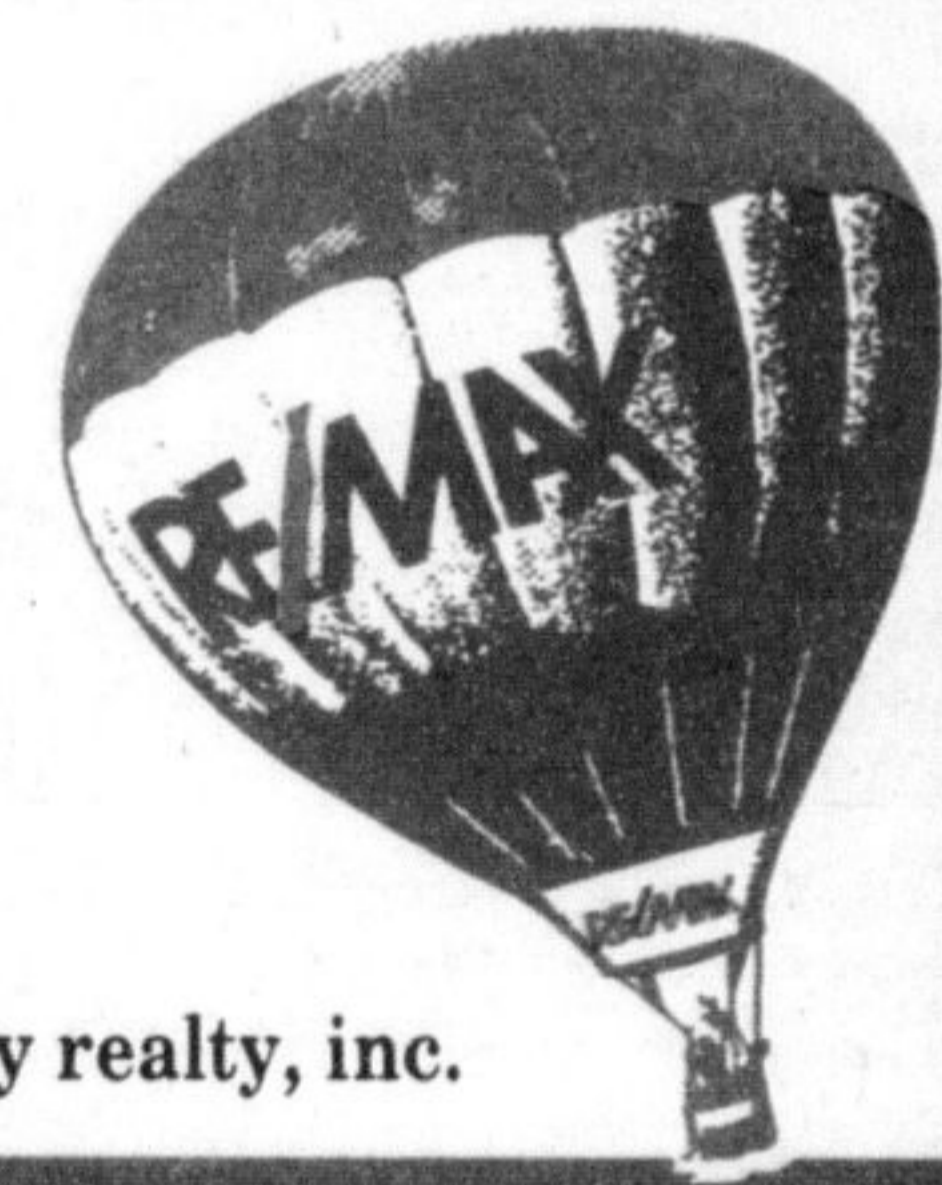
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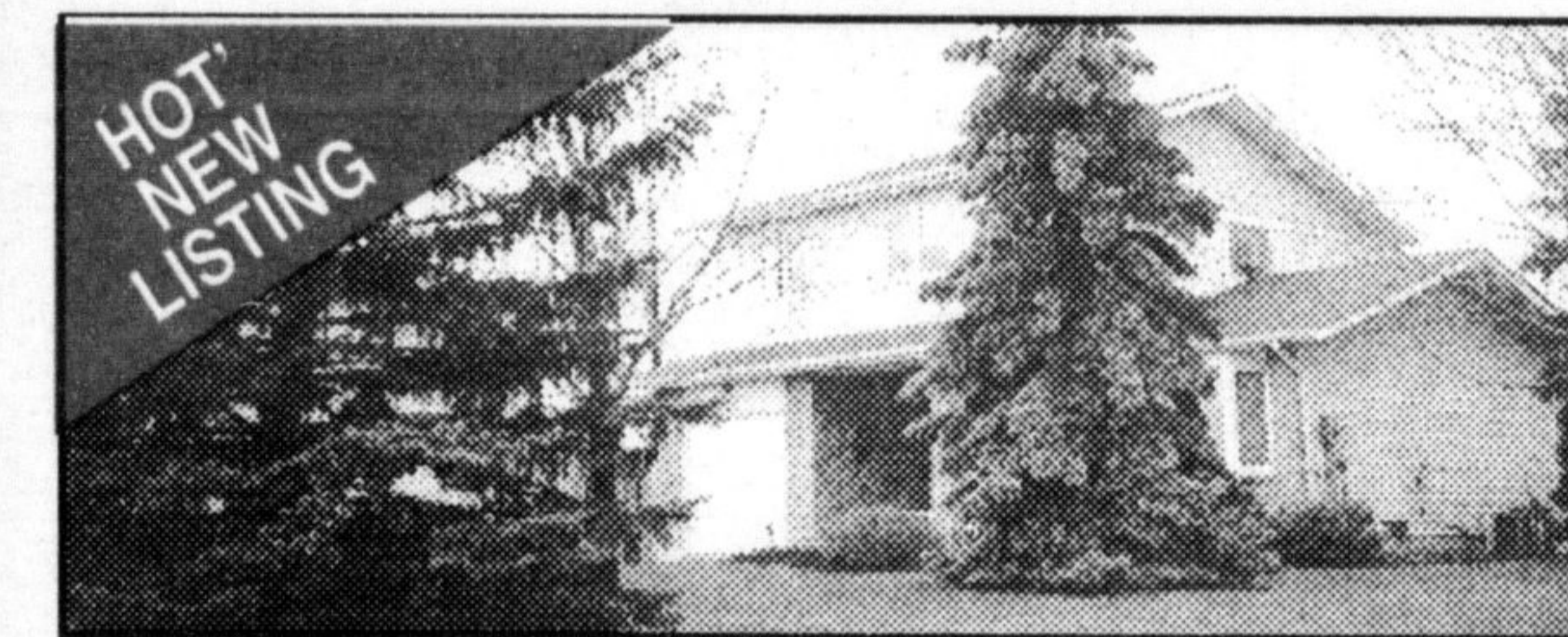


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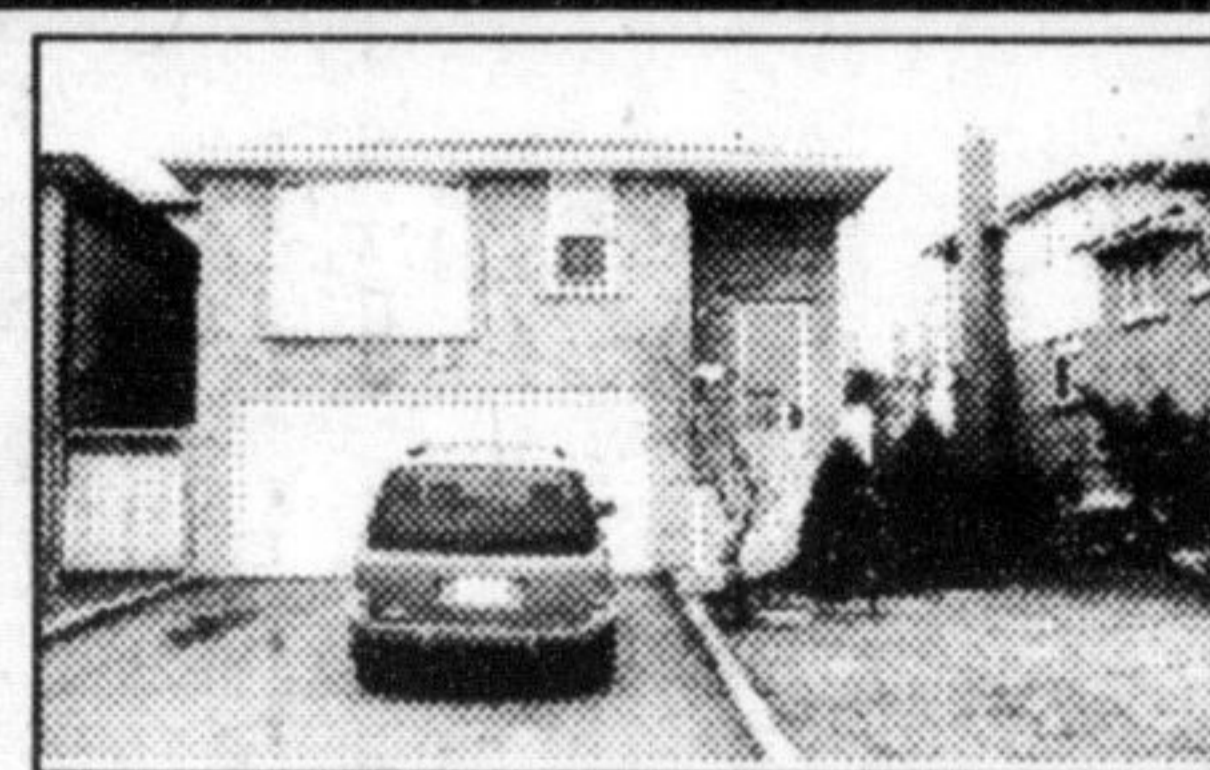
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