

Better Homes and Gardens®

Easy-Grow
Herbs
for Patio
Pots page 90

AUGUST 2012
BHG.COM

fresh, fast, cool

Summer's
Favorites
Made New

Simple, Delicious
Garden Dinner

Carefree
Party on
the Porch

Sunny Yellow
Hues for
Any Room

6
Smart Health
Habits to
Start Now

No-Bake
Icebox Pie page 141



Display Until August 21, 2012



between friends



The Good Life

Recently, I received a note from one of our favorite contributors, author and stylist Denise Gee. (Her charming porch party is featured on page 20.) After some gracious words about working on the story, Denise concluded her note by saying, "Thanks for everything you do to inspire the good life."

Those four simple words—"inspire the good life"—neatly sum up this magazine, and especially this August issue. The good life, after all, isn't composed solely of things, but of the experiences and environment we shape. It's there in essence-of-summer houses designed for calm, comfortable family living, page 30. It lives in a built-from-scraps "napping house" in a shady backyard, page 60. And, most certainly, it inhabits the summer meals we share around an outdoor table in the cool of sunset. What could surpass a garden-fresh dinner where the picking, cooking, and eating are all part of the experience? Food writer and self-described "big-city country boy" Ian Knauer shares his menu on page 112. Top it off with home-churned ice cream, page 120.

The good life spans all seasons. But I've always found it especially accessible in the backstretch of summer, when the food stands are abundant and a slower pace is just plain good manners. I hope our issue inspires you to shape a few good times of your own.

Gayle Goodson Butler,
Editor in Chief



WE ASKED OUR
FACEBOOK FANS

**Sugar cone
or cake
cone?**

12%
Cake

88%
Sugar

Fill up those cones with tasty homemade ice cream, page 120.

In your words...

Recipe contest ends up feeding the soul

Wow! Just look what you've brought to my life. Since being one of May's Prize Tested Recipes® winners, I've given "demo" parties for friends, been asked to make potato strata for my church's monthly dinner for the homeless, and heard from friends from around the world. But the very best thing was to receive a note from a long-lost friend who moved 3,000 miles away almost 10 years ago. Thank you. You just can't imagine what a joyful month this has been.

Linda Cobb
San Diego, CA

Dessert recipe takes the cake

Thank you for the awesome Rosemary-Strawberry Shortcake Pizza recipe

included with Domenica Catelli's feature in the June edition. It was fabulous! I served it for dessert at a backyard barbecue over Memorial Day weekend. Everyone raved about it. I added raspberries to the fruit and honey mix, which gave it a nice sweetness. I always love the recipes, but this one was particularly spectacular.

Jaime Willoughby
Burlington, VT
Get the recipe:
BHG.com/JuneShortcake

June recipes inspire mild and wild garden

I was trying to decide what to plant in the last corner of my garden box. I got my June *Better Homes and Gardens*® out of the mailbox, and on the cover: "Cooking with Chiles, Mild to Wild." Chiles it is.

Lynda Johnson, via Facebook

Handy bar

Party guests mix mojitos using ingredients displayed on a bookshelf turned drink station. Turn to page 26 for the recipe.



Make Your Own
Mojito

Drop handful of herbs in glass
Add jigger of fave syrup and rum
Give it 2 teaspoons lime juice

Muddle with Care

Fill glass $\frac{3}{4}$ full with ice
Squeeze in 2 lime wedges
Top with club soda, stir, and

ENJOY!

Sips at Sundown

Before summer slips away, call your friends and neighbors over for a porch party. A DIY mojito station stirs things into action.

BY KELLY RYAN KEGANS | PHOTOS DAVID A. LAND
PRODUCED BY DENISE GEE

Chilling out

Denise, standing, *this photo*, lets guests serve themselves at food and drink stations. She ices sodas in a plastic-lined urn, *below*.



Late Sunday afternoons at Denise Gee's Dallas home are a step back in time and a reminder of childhood hours spent on her grandmother's wraparound porch. "That was the setting for many a gathering of Nannie and Mama's friends, who'd be there at 5 o'clock to relax with a cocktail and gossip a bit," she says. Today, Denise, author of *Porch Parties*, regularly serves drinks, nibbles, and casual conversation on her own porch. "It's what I call the 'unplanned party plan,'" she says.





“The words ‘porch party’ let friends and neighbors off the hook. They can come and go as they please, wearing porch-casual attire.”

Denise Gee



Setting the scene

“Serve food that doesn’t require utensils so your guests don’t have to juggle,” Denise says. She uses stacked cake plates, *left*, to vary the height of her food display.

Light bites

Make signs using small frames or place cards so guests know what they’re dishing up. Denise’s pimiento cheese on cucumbers is a crowd favorite, *above left*.

Fruity “frocktail”

Denise likes to dress up her drinks with something special, such as juicy citrus knots to top off her watermelon agua fresca, *above middle*. The knots are easy to make: Using a sharp peeler or paring knife, cut an orange peel into ¼-inch-wide strips and tie. “Make them ahead and store in cold orange juice for even more flavor,” Denise says. Visit BHG.com/PorchParty for Denise’s agua fresca recipe.



Minty refresher

At Denise's mojito bar, guests concoct their own fruit-infused libations, *top*. To make, drop a palmful of mint or basil in a glass. Instead of sugar, Denise adds a jigger of fruit-flavored simple syrup (which she makes in advance) and rum. Add a couple of teaspoons of fresh lime juice and muddle the herbs. Fill the glass two-thirds full with ice and squeeze in two lime wedges. Top it off with club soda and stir. ■

Free recipe booklet!

Visit BHG.com/PorchParty for Denise's original recipes, adapted from *Porch Parties* and *Sweet on Texas*, out in October, (\$17 and \$25, Chronicle Books), plus a few of her BHG favorites.