

Little effort needed for pool maintenance

New owners of home swimming pools are often amazed to discover how little time and effort they have to spend on care and maintenance, the National Swimming Pool Institute reports.

On average, NSPI estimates, costs should run to no more than \$20 a month, and probably less. The time spent keeping the pool owner's two most common uninvited guests—dirt and bacteria at bay may be around an hour and a half a week.

Careful planning before the pool is purchased can help keep maintenance concerns to a minimum, too, NSPI advises. Positioning the pool away or upwind from trees can mean less leaves to contend with, and surrounding the pool with a reasonably-sized apron (three feet from pool edge to grass should be adequate) cuts down on foot-borne floating debris.

A skimmer will clear off debris from the pool's surface and an easy-to-use pool vacuum will enable the pool owner to efficiently eliminate anything that settles on the bottom.

Safe, effective and relatively inexpensive chemicals are available from members of the National Swimming Pool Institute to ensure that the home pool is bacteria-free. Daily doses are usually required, depending on such factors as pool traffic, hot weather and high winds. These conditions can create a need for more chemicals than usual.

The pool's filtering system will usually relieve the owner of a lot of debris-clearing duties, and care of the filter itself normally takes next to no time.

Time-savers in the form of automatic chemical dispensers, automatic cleaning systems and pool covers can mean day-to-day worries are nearly eliminated, a spokesman for the local NSPI chapter says.

Any NSPI member can explain all aspects of pool care and maintenance. Booklets on what needs to be done and how to do it are also available from NSPI as part of a "Pool Information Packet." Write NSPI Information, 2000 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006. Include \$3.50 to cover postage and handling costs.

Sappy beetle

What's black with yellow spots on its back, shiny and a fourth-inch long? If it's in your garden, it's probably the sap beetle.

According to Michigan State University entomologists, the sap beetle or picnic beetle is attracted to overripe or rotting fruits and vegetables. There are chemical insecticides labeled for use against it.

To control it, control the insects that damage crops and remove all damaged or overripe plant materials.



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