

**Down to earth**

# Capitalize on the sun to heat outdoor pool

By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME

We have many swimming pool owners in this area who wish to receive the maximum use from their pool. Yet, expense of operation is an important item. Here are some guidelines which might prove helpful whether you have a pool in Michigan or the southland.

A pool will stay an average of six degrees warmer if it is finished in a dark color which will absorb the sun's warmth—dark green, dark blue or black.

A new pool decking technique can

collect solar rays. A dark concrete-like material is installed as part of the pool decking. It is designed to absorb the sun's rays and transfer the heat to water running through a system of interconnected pipes within the paving slabs.

The pool's filtering pump cycles water through the system and back into the pool, giving an average temperature of 10 degrees above normal.

The National Swimming Pool Institute, 2000 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, has a fine guide book called "Wonderful World of Pools" at \$3.

IF YOU HAVE ASHES from an outdoor grill or the fireplace, be sure and use them as potash fertilizer. As they bleach out with the rain be sure and place them where you need the soil additive right away. If they will look odd on the surface, scramble them into the soil. They are alkaline, so don't use them as fertilizer near your acid-loving plants such as azaleas, hydrangeas or rhododendrons.

Some of you have been planting trees this spring. It is best not to fertilize the first year. Instead, spend your time on care around the base of the tree.

Keep the base area clean. We know that rodents will nibble on the bark and hide in tall grass in the cold weather. Now during the summer, keep competitive weeds away from the perimeter of the tree. This might sound like silly advice but many people are planting trees on uncultivated land for erosion and noise control.

If you are planting on your home lawn, I suggest two alternatives—either put stones the size of a fist in a three-foot diameter circle around the perimeter to prevent mowing damage.

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