

# 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

**R**ecently, 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](http://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](http://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](http://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.