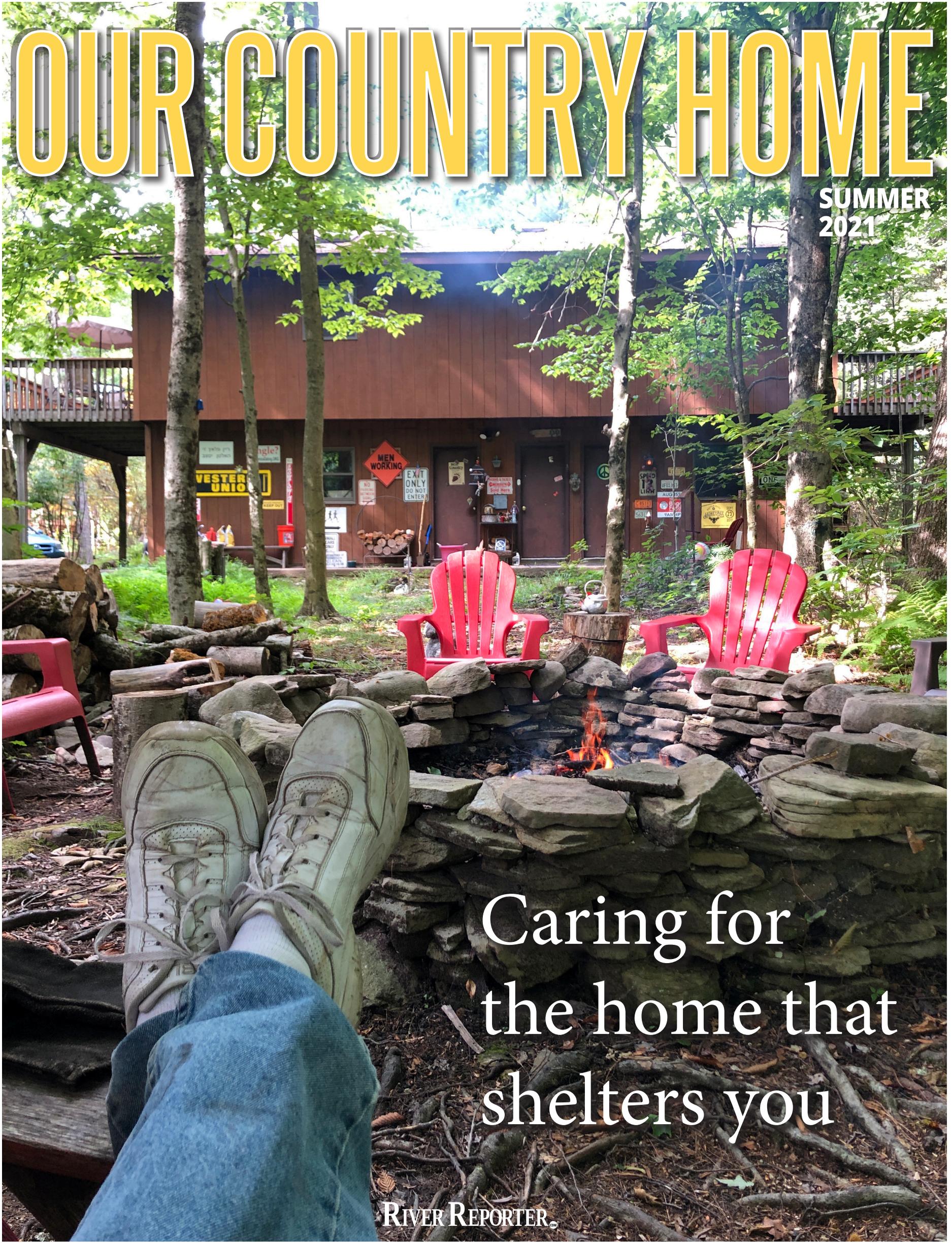


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## Editor's letter: *Early summer, 2021*

The sun's out. From my window, the Delaware is sparkling. It's a Wednesday, and a few canoeists drift by. That'll pick up on the weekend; looks to be a busy summer.

Everywhere I turn, there are new faces.

It feels a bit strange. Does anyone else remember when you could go to town and recognize almost everyone?

In this issue, we're thinking about summer and what's involved in caring for our homes as the sun beats down. How can we stay cool without harming the environment? How can we care for the soil, so we can grow flowers and food? Sharon Peduto offers a gentle piece on why gardening matters so much. Barbara Winfield tells us how to create comfort; we all need it.

Our wonderful friends and neighbors have given new residents more suggestions on how to enjoy your life here.

Sometimes, we need to care for things we'd rather not think about—like a septic tank. Consider this an introduction to the less savory part of country living!

Kristin White, the Chicken Librarian, is back to talk about feeding our flock—of chickens, that is.

And finally, readers of the **River Reporter** know Jonathan Charles Fox's regular



Photo by Joe Cooke

Meet Ollie. He's the boss of the Alabama cats. You can't really tell in the photo, but he's a big guy. A chonk, as one friend says.

column. Now he's welcoming you into his home for a visit in print, all while sharing stories. Of course, there's Dharma the Wonder Dog, too.

Have a wonderful summer, everyone.  
*Annemarie Schuetz, editor*  
*Our Country Home*

Cover photo by Jonathan Charles Fox

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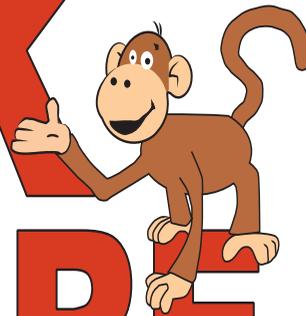


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RR photo by Jonathan Charles Fox

If you've followed Fox on Facebook, you've seen shots of the living room, especially the large stained-glass panel. Of course that has a story. "When I was a teenager, there was a church that was being taken down," he said. Fox cast his magpie eye on the stained glass and was told the windows were \$50 each. A lot of money for a kid. So, he rode his bike home and told his mom. Barbara Fox, no fool she, gave him the money, had them combined into one panel and "she kept it till she died," he said. Moving it to his home was a challenge; he padded the glass with memory foam mattresses, and it made it to his house unscathed.

# The things that matter

*Jonathan Charles Fox in his magical home*

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

"I lived through the 1994 earthquake, and almost everything I had broke," said Jonathan Charles Fox, **River Reporter** columnist and photojournalist. The Northridge Earthquake taught him that stuff "is not the be-all and end-all of existence."

After that, what he restored and what he acquired says a great deal about what matters to him now.

We may not need lots of things. But the things we have can matter.

## The wooden tent

First—the house itself. Built in 1979 and tucked into the woods, it is dressed in pieces of Fox's past and present. It changes. New paint here and there, an island added in the kitchen. A new sofa.

Like all of our houses, of course.

You can pretty much step right from the

house into the woods. They're encroaching, or looming, or maybe just waiting for a casual hike.

He grew up summering at Seneca Lake and in the Catskills, and Fox continues to love the outdoors, the country and campfires at night. He built the firepit himself and laid out the stones for the path from the house. Those stones came from the excavations when the place was built.

"Camping is a huge part of my life. It's why I moved back to the Catskills. I find myself seeking the woods more and more," he said.

That might be why he calls the house "that wooden tent."

## Inside

It's a house of stories, of course.

Architecturally, two-and-change: the ground floor (kitchen, office, bath, garage, stairs) and the larger main floor next (living

room, bedroom, main bath); a small loft on top, reached by a fragile-looking ladder.

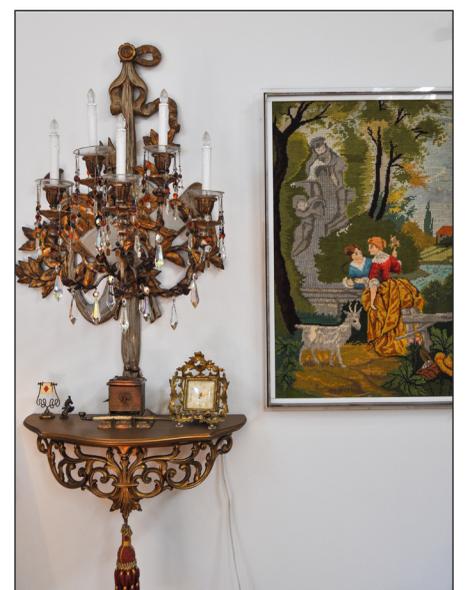
Pre-COVID-19, Fox spent his days traveling around, talking to people, attending events, working 70 hours a week. But "COVID gave me my house," he said.

It's a small space, maybe 1,100 square feet.

It's different from his childhood home. Fox grew up in Binghamton, in a big three-story with a turret. His grandmother lived on the third floor. Then they moved to a "modern house, with all the kitchen amenities." The kids, he said, hated it.

Small, of course, can be beautiful. His previous house in Santa Monica, CA was 650 square feet.

You might expect the present house to be crammed with relics from a lifetime spent in the public eye as a performer, a writer, and an attendee at arts events, **—Page 7**



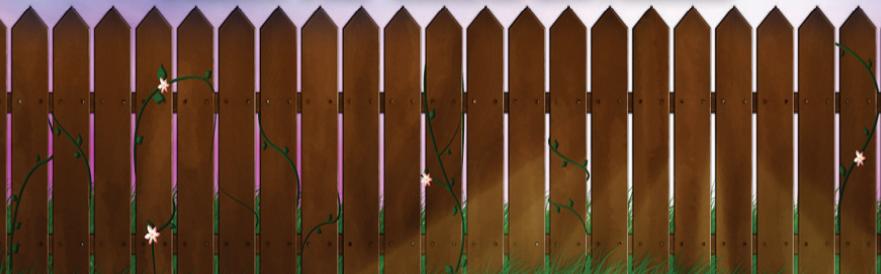
A family crest wall sconce next to needlework by Barbara Fox.

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# THINGS - Page 5

library events, picnics, parades, community festivals and so on. And don't actors live with endless shrines to the surface self?

Not always.

Fox references Norma Desmond a lot—that's "Sunset Boulevard," if you don't watch old movies—and he first saw the movie as a kid. It matters because Norma's house was as much of a character as the aging actress and her former-director, former-husband butler.

But there's nothing mad about this place (and no swimming pool to leave a murdered scriptwriter in). The only real reminder of his acting past is a collection of photographs in the office.

## Magpie DNA

Collecting special objects "was the sensibility I was raised with," Fox said. It sounds like his mother was the collector; part of his decor was hers. And the sense of the place, also hers: walls, hung with pictures and needlework, random lovely objects placed here and there. No space wasted.

"No, you don't see a lot of blank spaces," he agreed. "I have a great love of antiques. I've always had a great love of old things. The thrill of the hunt. I embrace it."

## Please touch

The house isn't a museum. The decor wasn't collected just for the sake of having it or even just to look at. You can touch it. When I bend close to look at a candelabrum, he calls out, "Go ahead! Touch it! I believe in touching things." (I give it a tiny, careful poke. I'm clumsy, and they're glass.)



Dharma the Wonder Dog gets ready for a good night's rest. She might make room for the staff.



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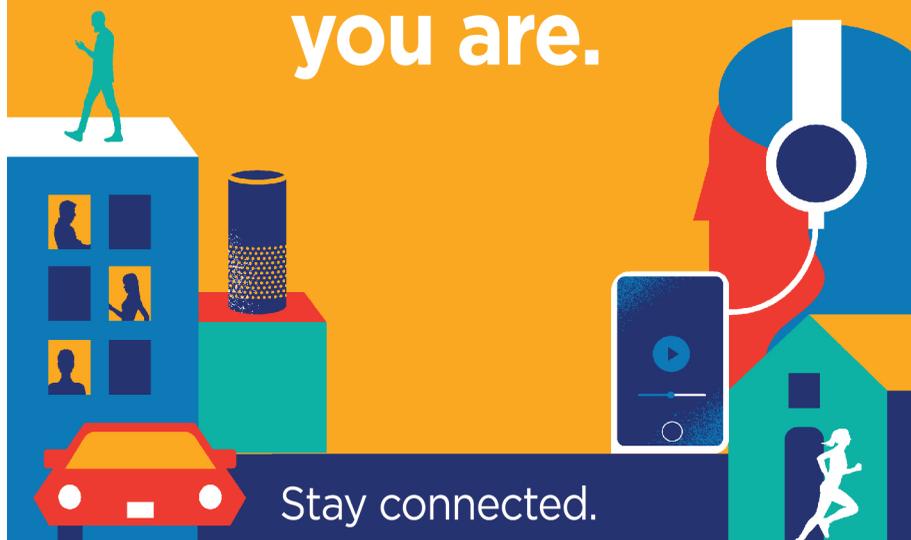
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**THINGS** - Page 7

Maybe he sees. “We were put on earth, we’re in this body, to enjoy the world, appreciate beauty, art and nature.”

**In the living room**

The light in the room is striking. A largely open floor plan and the loft at the top give airiness and space. Skylights let in more light, even on a cloudy day like today. “I used to dream about skylights,” Fox said. “Be careful what you wish for.” Maintaining them can be a challenge, for sure.

The windows aren’t curtained—“I never wanted window treatments”—and not only does that let in more light, but it brings the woods closer.

The room is full of memories of his mother, Barbara; Fox inherited some of her furniture, needlework and her other art. “She was an artist,” he says. “I just take pictures.”

Which are, largely, tucked away right now or being framed; he’s planning a future show. “Photography came to me late in life but it gives me so much joy,” Fox says.

Many of his photos in the pandemic have, by necessity, been of nature, since there have been so few events. Nature photos aren’t necessarily immediate.

You slow down, look and wait. As the pandemic wanes, he’s looking forward to some adaptation of the previous life. “I love people, I love sharing their enthusiasm for the arts,” he said. He’ll keep working on the house, letting it reflect his life as that evolves.

“I’m much more present than I used to be. I don’t live in the past and I don’t live in the future. All we have is now.”



Photo by Joe Cooke

Everything in the Fox house has a story.



Photo by Joe Cooke

Still life with candles, glasses and a portrait of Barbara Fox at age 15.



Photo by Joe Cooke

This chair (originally from a church) was owned by Barbara Fox and re-upholstered by her in “electric paisley,” her son said. It lived in storage for years and, eventually, refurbished, landed in Fox’s home,

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# Flushed away

*Regular maintenance is the key to a happy septic system*

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

If you're used to flushing everything into the sewer, coming to grips with a septic tank can be a new experience.

Some villages and hamlets have a sewer system, but most of us here rely on the old-fashioned septic tank (they go back to the 1860s) to deal with our wastewater and effluvia.

Yes, it's another responsibility for the new country dweller, but septic tanks aren't complicated. And you don't have to worry about alligators or snakes climbing up your pipes into your toilet.

## Septic tank basics

The people in your house produce waste, which goes through your pipes and into the tank. Once in the tank, the grease and lighter solids float on top, while the heavier solids sink to the bottom. Not just poop and TP, but food that went down your sink and anything else that got flushed down the toilet. (Most of which probably shouldn't have been flushed in the first place, OK?)

Bacteria in the tank break down the solids.

The wastewater goes out to the leach field and gets dispersed.

What's a leach field? Basically, it's a trench filled with clean stone. A perforated pipe comes from the tank and runs down the length of the trench. Wastewater goes into the pipe and gets dispersed into that part of your yard. The soil around the trench removes any harmful bacteria.

## Care and feeding of the tank

Repeat after me: I will get my tank pumped regularly, not just when things start gurgling and there's a funny smell in the backyard.

- Page 13



Photo contributed by the Pennsylvania Septage Management Association

A septic tank gets cleaned.



## Finding your system

If you've just moved in, you may have to find your system before you can have the tank pumped.

The easiest and best way is to call your local septic management company; they know the area and they may even know your house. But if you're curious, there are some videos on Inspectapedia that might help: [www.bit.ly/septicoch](http://www.bit.ly/septicoch).



## Troubleshooting

The University of Nebraska at Lincoln lists some danger signs to watch for. If you see a problem, call your septic management company.

Do you hear gurgling when the toilet flushes or the shower/tub drains?

Is drainage sluggish?

Is wastewater surfacing in your yard?

Do you smell sewage in your yard? In your house?

Are your drains backing up?





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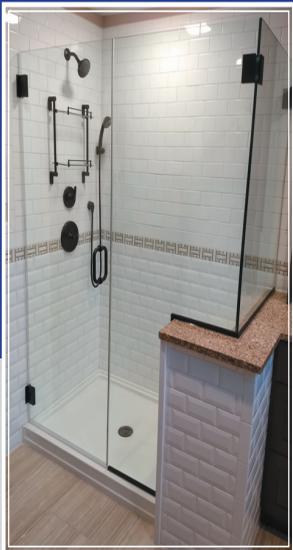
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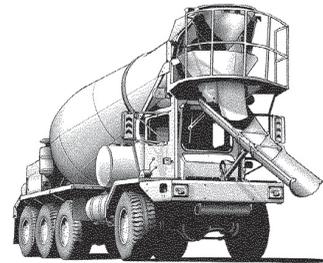
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## FLUSHED AWAY - Page 11

"Penn State did a study," said Ned Lang, owner of Enviroventures in Narrowsburg. "A tank should be cleaned out every 2.7 years."

Just do it. Don't wait for it to be full of sludge. Don't use additives that promise to extend the time between pumpings.

"Some can cause [the solids in] your tank to just turn and not settle," Lang said. When you look in the tank, you can see "an oily black slime and the water is black."

When the bacteria stop working, then the sewage starts making its way into the leach field. You don't want that. The Washington State University Cooperative Extension wrote that some additives "can also corrode concrete tanks and distribution boxes, causing them to leak and potentially break apart. Research found hydrogen peroxide degrades soil structure in a drainfield, reducing its ability to treat and absorb wastewater effluent."

Watch your water use, Lang said. "Try to use low-flush toilets, low-water-use showerheads." Water softeners or conditioners release a large amount of water when they backwash, which can overload the system, he explained. "The salts will cause harm to your bacteria in your septic tank, causing solids to escape the septic tank and enter the drain field." In fact, "fix running toilets," for the same reason.

Be careful what you flush. Those flushable wipes? Aren't flushable. They'll block your indoor pipes (that's a plumbing problem) and they can get into the septic system, where they don't break down, Lang said. For that matter, don't flush garbage, feminine hygiene products, dirt, dental floss, hair, or cat litter. Just because something can go down the toilet doesn't mean it should.

(If you're bored, Google "strange things found in septic tanks.")

Just follow some simple rules, get the tank pumped regularly, and, well, you're good to go.

Want more info? Visit Pennsylvania Septage Management Association at [www.pasma.org](http://www.pasma.org).

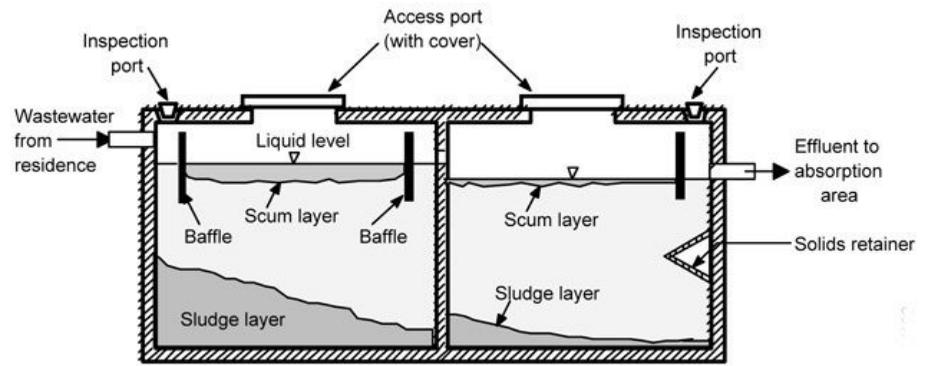


Photo from Penn State

The inside of a two-compartment septic tank. Now you don't need to look inside yours.

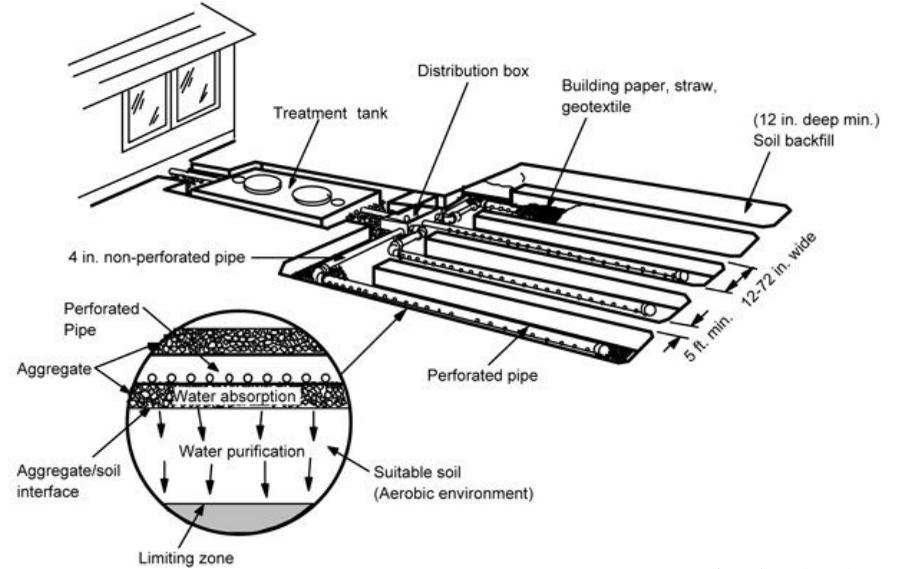


Photo from Penn State

And this is what's buried in your backyard: the tank and its leachfield.



Photo by Amy Galford, Penn State

Actual photo of the inside of a septic tank. But cleaner.

## Some extra tips

Ned Lang is also the president of the Pennsylvania Septage Management Association (PSMA), and he's shared some tips:

- Know where your tank and other septic components are in case things need servicing
- Mark the pump-out access cover if it's underground
- Trim growth over the leach field to prevent erosion
- Don't add home remedies like beer or yeast to the tank; it doesn't need the help. Don't put dead animals down the tank either.
- PSMA recommends not using garbage disposals with septic systems. Roto-Rooter says that the food particles settle to the bottom of the tank, adding to the um, stuff there. The tank's bacteria can't digest it all fast enough, and you'll need to pump the tank more often.
- Do not put coffee grounds into your tank.
- Do not drive vehicles or put heavy objects (like a swimming pool) on top of a tank or leach field.
- Do not cover the leach field with hard surfaces like concrete or asphalt.



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# Creating comfort in your home

By BARBARA WINFIELD

This past year has been a challenge for many of us. Having to stay home, social distance and, in some cases, isolate, it's no wonder we turn to our homes for comfort. One of the ways to create a comfortable home is to get organized and get rid of clutter. Organizing means different things to different people. With some, it's paring down; others need more storage; and for most of us, it is a little of both.

Before starting, think about the types of things that have to be organized, then break the project down room by room and section by section. Whether you start at the front hall or backdoor, the following ideas are sure to help you start to get your home in order:

## Foyer

- Install bookshelves or open cubbies beneath a staircase.
- Hang a peg rack along the wall near the entrance for hats and scarves.
- Use a decorative basket by the front and back door to hold shoes.
- Place a chest of drawers and a mirror in the hall next to the front door.
- Attach a key rack inside the hall closet door.

## Mudroom

- If room permits, place a cushioned storage bench against one wall.
- Paint one wall with chalkboard paint as a place to leave messages and shopping lists.

- Add a wall-hung hutch or cabinet with cubbies in the mudroom to hold hats and gloves.
- Hang a broom and dustpan or a small cordless vacuum on the wall for easy cleanup.
- Incorporate a niche into the back hall for your pet's food and water.

## Kitchen

- Remove counter clutter by installing an appliance garage between the upper kitchen cabinets and the counter space.
- Install a Shaker peg rack or a single rail rack on one wall to hold pots and pans.
- Use colorful plastic baskets to contain loose items in your freezer.
- Hang pegboard to a wall, paint it a bright color and add hooks to hold soup ladles, slotted spoons and colanders.
- Paint an old dresser and place it in the kitchen to hold dishcloths, napkins and tabletop accessories.

## Bath

- Use a decorative lazy Susan on top of a counter to hold cosmetics and lotions.
- Add a storage bench upholstered in outdoor (waterproof) fabric, for sitting and storing small items.
- Place a wine rack on one wall to hold rolled-up towels.
- Use a wicker basket with a lid to conceal toilet paper.
- Store children's bath toys in mesh bags attached to the wall with suction hooks.



A wicker basket offers discreet storage for your spare toilet rolls. Also keeps all that tempting paper away from your cats/photo by Joe Cooke

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# Chicken feed

*What your fabulous fowl love to eat*

By KRISTIN WHITE

Hey, chicken tenders! It's Kristin, from the Chicken Librarian, here to tell you all about feeding those beautiful birds. If you caught us in the last Our County Home, you learned all about getting started with keeping chickens. This time, let's dive in to discussing how to feed your birds. You'd think it was pretty straightforward, and it is, but there are a few things you need to know.

First, you bring home those babies and you wonder, "What do they eat?" It's pretty simple. Start them on "chick starter feed." They'll be on this starter feed up until they're about 6 weeks old. This feed has lots of protein in it (look for a feed with at least 20 percent protein) that helps the babies start life on the right foot.

Next, you will feed those growing babies "grower feed." This feed will contain less calcium and protein, which is just what they need. Too much protein and calcium can cause kidney and liver issues. But let's not be wasteful here. If you have starter feed leftover, you can mix it in with the grower feed until it's gone. It's also a good idea to not make the switch too quickly but, rather, gradually. Mix in a little of the grower mix at a time until you have completely switched them over. Feed them the grower feed until they are about to lay—at roughly 20 weeks old.

Now you are on to "layer feed," and you know what that means, right? You guessed it! Those babies are about to be fully grown and laying eggs for you. Some chickens can take longer to lay, but you should start to see signs by 20 weeks of age. Of course, their nutritional needs are different now, too. At this stage, they need less protein and more calcium. Calcium is key when it comes to egg layers. So, do the same as you did for switching from starter to grower: gradually phase out the grower food until you are completely on a layer feed.

And once you get that first egg, start providing supplementary calcium. I hang a rabbit feeder on the wall of the coop with ground-up oyster shells (it's a great source of calcium that can be purchased at your local feed store). However, there are many different ways you can provide calcium. A quick internet search will provide more ideas than you'll ever need.

Once you've switched the chickens to the layer feed, that is all they will need from there on out. And if you have roosters in your flock, they will eat exactly what the hens eat—no need to feed them something different. Easy, right?

There are a few other things you need to know about feeding chickens. First, I would advise to not feed them anything other than chick starter for the first couple weeks of life.

But, wait a minute: If they're hatched by a hen and raised by Mama Hen, don't they start eating "treats" right away? They do. But there are a couple of reasons it's different when you raise them inside. The first reason, and this is my theory, is that the birds (most likely) came from a hatchery where they are not living a natural life. They are in production mode and are not out on pasture. So, those chicks that are hatched at the hatchery need extra time to figure out what food is and what treats are. Believe me, it takes them a while. You have to teach them the things that they need to know, just as if you were Mama Hen—well, because you are Mama Hen!

- Page 16

## About Chicken Librarian

Kristin White runs Chicken Librarian, where she teaches homesteading courses for life. You can find her living a handmade life while free-ranging on the banks of the Delaware River, in the foothills of the Catskills, with the Mister, a good girl pup, two very bad kitties and eight pretty girl chickens. She enjoys the homesteading, made-from-scratch life that includes knitting, raising chickens, pie making, beer making, bread making, gardening and seasonal eating. She also enjoys photography. And wine. And she reads. A lot.

Contact Kristin to find out how she can help you live a life simply, successfully and filled with all things homesteading. You can find her at [www.chickenlibrarian.com](http://www.chickenlibrarian.com), Facebook, Instagram, or email at [chickensandthelibrarian@gmail.com](mailto:chickensandthelibrarian@gmail.com).



## CHICKEN FEED - Page 15

Along those same lines, if they are hatched in your coop by Mama Hen, they will follow in her footsteps. So, she will teach them where to eat, what to eat, how to eat and everything that follows. So, I let them figure out where the food and water are, and then, after a week or two, I start adding in extra treats. And when you do add in treats, this is the time to start adding in grit. They need grit in order to crush up their food. Chickens don't have teeth; they have crops where the food and water go to be ground down and passed through their system. And they need this grit to help grind the food.

### Where to get the food

Where do you get food, grit and calcium? You can find ready-made food at your local feed store, such as Agway, Tractor Supply, or Cochection Mills. They have a wide variety of food, supplements and additives, including organic items. You can also purchase food online and have it shipped to you through companies such as Chewy. It's amazing what you can get shipped.

You can also make your own food. It takes a lot of research to make sure you've come up with a correct formula, but in the end, it will be a money saver. No matter which route you go, make sure chicken feed is stored in a clean, dry container with a tight-fitting lid.

But you might be wondering if it's OK to feed them kitchen scraps: yes! By all means, feed them your scraps and leftovers. I mean, that's one big reason we have chickens. They can pretty much eat anything, including meat. They love meat. But let's leave leftover chicken for other uses, m'okay?



Here's Buddy the Rooster. He will eat the same food as the rest of the flock. No need for specialized food for roos.

Photo by Kristin White

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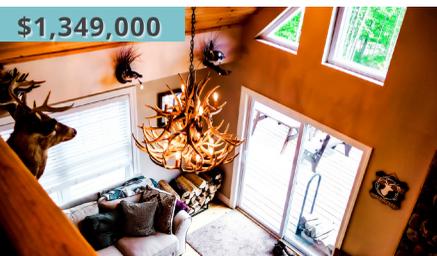
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# Got dirt?

*Then you got the basics of soil*

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

To have a garden, whether in the ground or in containers, you need soil, says Brenda Miller, environment and natural resources program manager at Cornell Cooperative Extension in Sullivan County.

That seems obvious, right? You have to put seeds or plants in something. But local forums are full of new residents asking, “Where can I buy soil?”

“If you have a yard, even a small one, you have the beginnings of a garden,” Miller says. Now you just need to help the soil along—let it reach its full potential.

And at the same time, you’re restoring a little piece of the Earth.

## Get to know your soil

Learning your soil and helping it become better “is the basis of everything we do as gardeners,” Miller said.

To do that, wait for a dry day.

Then till the soil, just enough to turn it over.

“If it’s wet, you’re just pounding the ground,” Miller said.

Then it’s time for the soil test.

You’ll find out the pH—acid soil or alkaline? Here, it’s largely acidic. You can add lime to balance the pH out.

“If your pH is off, your plants are going to be stunted, your yield will be reduced.” Balance your pH, and not only will that improve the plants but they’ll also “be more resistant to disease.”

“Getting soil tested is very, very important,” Miller said. You’ll learn what macronutrients are already in your soil. “You want healthy plants that will outcompete the weeds.”

You could say that some weeds have evolved to thrive in soil that hasn’t been cared for.

Then there’s figuring out your soil’s tex-



Photo by Sharon Peduto

Soil, seed-ready: just waiting for someone to get planting.

**What you want is loam: a balance of all the elements. It has organic content, it has nutrients, it drains and it’s easier to till than clay, said Miller.**

ture. You’re aiming for “a nice loam, a mix of all elements”: clay, silt and sand. The size of the soil particles determines which category it falls into.

How can you tell what you have? Well, you can send some soil to a lab, but you can also just go out, grab a handful of dirt and pay attention. Is it gritty, doesn’t stick together and slips through your fingers? Probably sand, says a paper by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Silty soil breaks apart easily and looks floury when dry. Clay forms large clods and cracks will appear on its surface. It’s sticky and can be molded when damp.

Each one has its virtues. Clay can deliver nutrients to plants like nobody’s business. Sand warms up fast and drains well, and root vegetables, like potatoes, love it. Silt, the National Geographic Society says, is more fertile (consider the Nile and how it fed Egypt). It supports water retention and air circulation.

What you want is loam: a balance of all the elements. It has organic content, it has nutrients, it drains and it’s easier to till than clay, said Miller.

But don’t go nuts with the tilling.

“The critical element is air spaces. The structure of the soil. You can break it down, like with too much roto-tilling, and then it’s really hard to get back... it’s critical to till your soil with care.”

## Then, prep the ground

Depending on the results of the test, add lime.

Till again. And then stop. Remember, don’t over-till.

Plant.

Here’s a test: grow carrots. “The carrot is the bellwether of how your soil is doing,” said Miller. Is it sweet? Mostly straight? That’s a carrot grown in good soil.

“Go through one season,” she said. “See how things did. Play with cover crops. Nature abhors bare ground.”

That’s because wind and water will erode land without something growing on it, even if it’s a cover crop like clover, ryegrass or winter wheat. In the spring, dig it in by hand. It’s green manure, as the cooperative extension says.

This way, “you’re never degrading your soil. You’re always improving it. You’re capturing carbon in the Earth.”



Photo contributed by Ramona Jan

One way to help your soil is to create compost from your kitchen scraps. You can just pile it up in your yard, or put it in a container like this to let it work. The log is there to keep the skunk out.

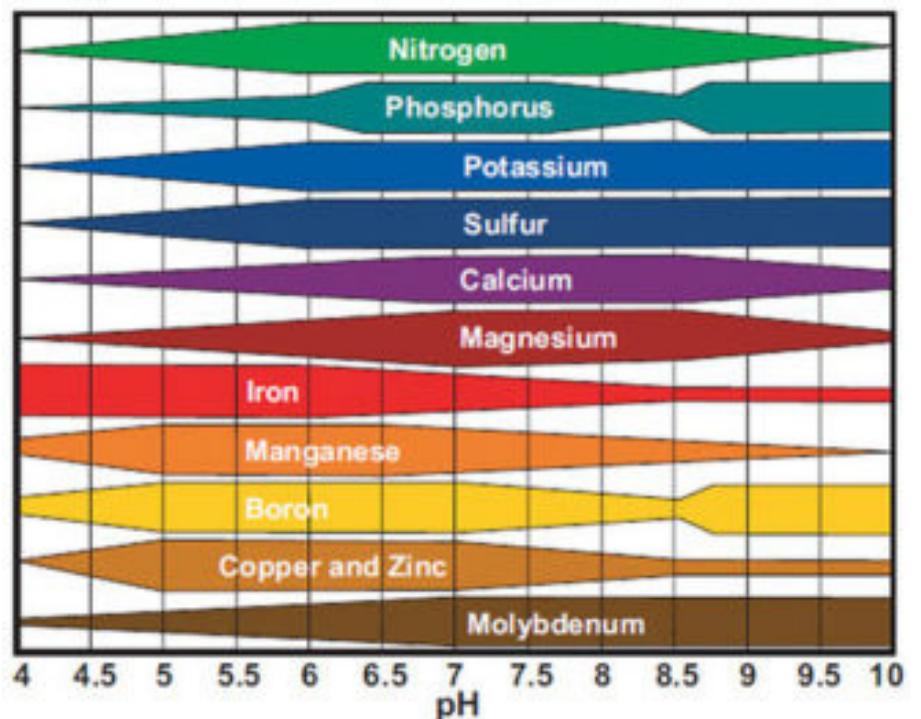


Chart contributed by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County

Your plants want vitamins too. The lower the pH, the more acidic the soil, and the more likely you are to get certain vitamins and not others. Yet another reason to get your soil tested.



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# Don't bother me

## *I'm playing in the dirt*

By SHARON PEDUTO

Regardless of my age, size of my property, or financial situation, I plant.

It is my therapy. I can talk to plants and they don't answer, much like many expensive therapists. Gardening regenerates my spirit, which begins running low toward the end of our six to seven months of pre-COVID winters; even more now. After so much news of illness and death, my heart sings in anticipation of spring. Now is the time for birth and regeneration.

My house of worship for spiritual renewal cannot be contained by walls. It is everywhere—especially here, in the mountains, near a great river. "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away"—this quote has many authors. The beauty here cannot be ignored. You can see it, hear it, feel it, smell it and taste it.

Every time a seed sprouts, it takes my breath away. Yes, every time. Seedlings represent a new beginning. They must weather the elements, adapt to their environment and endure stressors such as heat, drought, disease, weeds and preda-

tors. How that seedling survives is not just its DNA but also the help it gets along the way in order to thrive. Some make it, some don't. A lot like humans.

Anger management. I use weeding for all my frustrations, turning negative energy into something positive. Fortunately, weeds never sleep, so there's plenty to pull when needed. If you don't have any weeds, then your soil needs something. If a weed won't grow in your dirt, nothing else will either.

My gym. I don't have to pay any fees. I walk out my door and get on my knees to pull out those weeds—I'm digging, raking, filling in holes, preparing my beds, transplanting plants that weigh a ton when wet. The next day, I can feel every muscle in my arms, calves, thighs and glutes. It's not painful. It is the waking of those muscles that haven't shoveled snow in a while or done much of anything physical (unless you count eating as exercise).

My tanning salon is the sun, filled with vitamin D. Give me a few hours of sun and my energy kicks in. When I play in the dirt, there's no need to sunbathe. I'm up and out with the birds, in with the bees and water-



Photo by Sharon Peduto

An abundance of flowers in a Narrowsburg garden. ing if needed at 5 p.m. I'm grateful when it rains.

Meditation to me means focusing on a phrase, a mantra, so as to keep all other thoughts out of my mind, to find Nirvana. Evidently, it turns out I can't remember my mantra. However, I can remember to look for where I've seeded. What I've seeded is a different story. It doesn't matter. It's a surprise garden. I am never disappointed! Planting even a few seeds in a small con-

tainer, watching with such focus those tiny sand size flecks daily turn into flowers, vegetables or herbs or even a blade of grass—that is my Nirvana.

By fall, I have regained my spiritual and physical strength, emotional health and perspective. Six months of daily reminders: to be patient, one day at a time, I can do this, be grateful, some things work and some don't—that's life. Don't let the weeds in life spoil your dreams.



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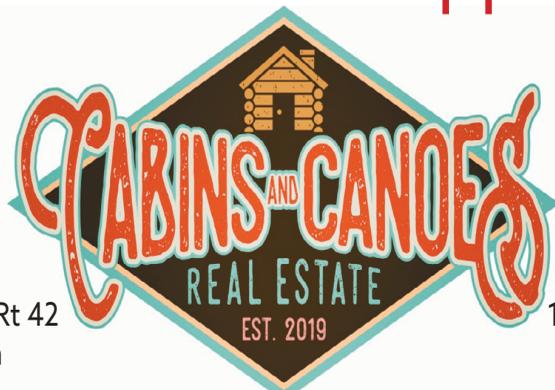


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## Picking up

Please dispose of your trash properly; soda cans, water bottles and cigarette butts are an eyesore.

Most towns do a free "get rid of stuff" day at the town offices where you can bring old garden equipment and other non-toxic trash.

Do not leave your trash by the side of the road. Do not stick it in random trash cans. We have to pay for garbage removal here. Take it to the dump. It's not expensive and will keep our roads clean.

## Community-minded

Please shop locally and support organizations that keep our area a special place to be.

Thank your township supervisor/local elected official; they work hard for not a lot of money.

Get involved and volunteer if you can. It's the best way to get to know your neighbors.

Know that pancake breakfasts, penny socials and spaghetti dinners are the ways locals raise money for charitable organizations in non-pandemic times.

To find places to hike, bike and walk, check out [www.Trailkeeper.org](http://www.Trailkeeper.org) and [sullivanandw.com](http://sullivanandw.com).

Sign onto the weekly emails from the Sullivan County Visitors Association to see what's going on and follow local businesses on their social media accounts.

## Deer, deer

Deer jump out in front of you all the time. In June, there will be fawns, and they cross, and stop, and then here comes another baby on its long spindly legs. We really have to slow down and be careful.

When there is one deer crossing the road, there are usually more about to follow. Stop and then slow down and let them pass.

Catmint and Russian sage are the only plants I've found to be truly deer-proof.



A really lovely set of trash cans on Callicoon's Lower Main Street/photo by Joe Cooke

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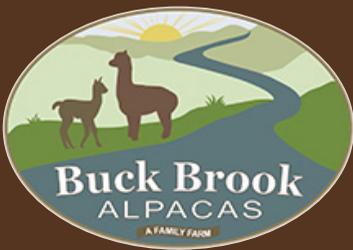
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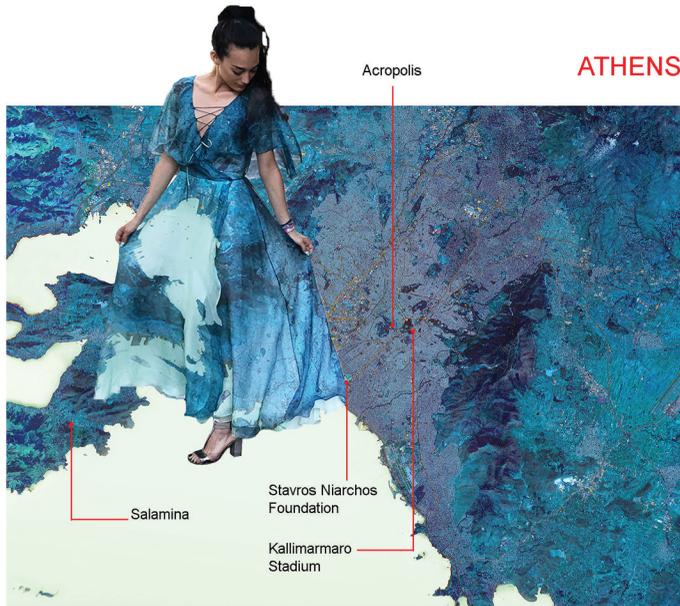
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