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GREEN AT HOME Green ways to clean your grill and keep pests at bay

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MELODY WREN

SPECIAL TO YOURHOME.CA

It's a wonderful time of year, even if you aren't able to get away for a holiday. Weekends fill with barbecues, friends and family, and evenings spent sitting under the stars on the deck.

SHUTTERSTOCK

But, after a delicious grilled meal, you're left with loads of dishes and a sticky barbecue. That residue can affect the cooking time of your next meal, and it could also change the flavour and stick to the food you're preparing.

Cleaning the grill thoroughly is the best way to deal with it. Doing it right away makes it easier. And, believe it or not, there is a way to get it thoroughly clean without noxious sprays. Taking care of your grill properly means it will last for many barbecues and will be healthier to cook on.

How to:

- Cover it up! Close the lid of your barbecue, which will allow the temperature to rise to the maximum and avoid a loss of heat, which is a crucial part of the cleaning process.
- Make it hot, hot, hot! Turn up the burner heat to high. Wait until the temperature has reached the maximum at the top of the thermometer. If you have no thermometer or other temperature readers, wait for five minutes to let the heat build up. Then shut everything off and open the lid.
- Brush it off! Use a wire brush to scrape off the ashes of what was once sticky residue. This type of brush is your best bet, as its bristles can handle the heat and will not melt or catch fire.
- Try a DIY cleaner: You can clean your grill with a barbecue brush and a thick paste of baking soda and water. Or, cut an onion in half and rub it over a heated rack. Follow up by brushing a bit of olive oil on it so the food doesn't stick.

And, with summer comes those pesky bugs — which can quickly ruin an evening of outdoor entertaining. Try repelling them with these green home remedies:

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