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Grill Maintenance

Gas Grills

With Each Use:

- Preheat the grill with all burners on high for 10 to 15 minutes. Scrub the hot grates briskly with a brass-bristle brush. (The brush itself won't need cleaning.) If you don't have one, crush a sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil into a ball, grasp it with long tongs, and use it to scrub the grates.

- After grilling, close the lid and leave the burners on for about 10 minutes, to burn off any food. Then turn off the heat and immediately scrub the grates again.

- Check drip pans. Empty and clean the large one that catches food (wear rubber gloves and wash with a scrubbing sponge and dishwashing liquid) monthly if you grill often. The smaller disposable one below it catches grease. Replace it with a new aluminum pan when it is half full.

Once a Year:

- Just before grilling season, do a thorough cleaning. Turn the burners on high, close the lid, and let the grill run for 20 to 40 minutes, depending on how dirty it is. Turn the burners off when the residue has burned down to a white-gray ash that can be brushed away easily. Turn the heat off, and brush the grates thoroughly with a brass-bristle brush.

- Let the grill cool, and then disconnect the propane tank. Wash the lid, the grates, and the exterior using dishwashing liquid, warm water, and a scrubbing sponge. Rinse well. Remove and wash the large drip pan, and replace the small pan.

- If your igniters or burners don't work or the grates are caked with grime that you can't remove, consider replacing those parts (the grill's manufacturer can provide sources). Depending on the cost of parts, it may make more sense to buy a new grill rather than repair an old one.

Charcoal Grills

With Each Use:

- Preheat the grill with the lid on but the vents open, about 30 minutes. Scrub the grates with a brass-bristle brush, as described for gas grills. After cooking, scrub the grates again.
- After grilling, replace the grill's lid, and let the coals burn out, incinerating any leftover food. When the grill is cool, use a metal scoop to remove ashes, transferring them to a small metal pail to avoid a fire hazard.

Once a Year:

- Wash and rinse the grill inside and out using a sudsy mix of dishwashing liquid and warm water and a scrubbing sponge. It's easy to take the grill apart and give the pieces a good rinse with a garden hose; some people use power washers. Let the pieces dry in the sun before reassembling.
- If there is a lot of residue on the grate, you may want to buy a new one.