

ADVENTURES backyard entertainment

# Outdoor Cinema on a Budget

BY CHRISTINA HANSEN

**W**ith budgets tighter than ever, inexpensive entertainment options are in high demand – particularly those close to home. This summer, watch a movie amid the fresh air in your own outdoor home theater. It's easier and more cost effective than you might think, and much more fun!

Here's what you'll need to transform your backyard into a slice of home theater heaven:

**Video Screen:** When it comes to setting up a budget-friendly outdoor movie screen, just about anything goes, including white bedsheets, blackout cloth (available at most fabric stores), canvas dropcloths, plywood, backer board, or even a smooth white wall.

**Projector:** Dust off an old LCD or DLP projector and bring it outside. If you need to start from scratch, projectors can be purchased new for anywhere from \$500 - \$1500. Or scour classified ads, garage sales and reputable online home theater forums for less expensive used projectors.

**Speakers:** Don't jump to the conclusion that you need to invest in full-on Surround Sound or dedicated outdoor speakers – while they do sound great, you're better off saving your cash and pumping the audio through old stereo speakers, instead.

**DVD Player:** Start by looking at what you already own before buying a new DVD player for your outdoor home theater. But even if you don't have an extra DVD player lying around, a brand-new basic model can be had for under \$50.

**Video Game Console:** If you or the kids



are feeling too antsy to sit through an entire movie, break out the Xbox or PS3, hook it up to your projector, and find out how much fun the combination of summer breeze and Rock Band 2 can be.

**Outdoor Extension Cord:** Made to withstand weather and the kind of wear and tear that can only occur in open-air environments, outdoor power cords are the safest and most effective way to power home theater equipment under the stars.

**Surge Protector:** Leave the expensive surge suppressor indoors where it belongs, and use a simple surge-suppressing power strip, like the SocketSense™ adjustable surge protector, instead.

**Cord Cover:** Don't let the fun be interrupted by a trip-and-fall accident; instead, protect moviegoers by keeping power extensions

concealed (and safely traversable) with rugged cord covers, like Rubber Ducts by Electriduct.

**Rolling Equipment Cart:** Rolling carts reduce equipment-hauling woes by saving time, preventing lifting injuries, and decreasing the chances of that butterfingers neighbor dropping your projector.

**Light Strands:** It's always a good idea to have a little light to move around by without tripping in the dark. Create a soft glow that won't detract from the onscreen action by hanging a few strands of Christmas lights around your theater's perimeter.

Now all you need is the popcorn to start your own outdoor movie experience. **WFM**

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

**CableOrganizer.com** is the one-stop shop for getting those unruly cables organized as well as electrical supplies, network products, home theater components, and more. [www.CableOrganizer.com](http://www.CableOrganizer.com)

Looking for a list of top-rated family movies to show on your super-sized screen? [http://www.filmcrave.com/list\\_genre\\_movie.php?genre=Family](http://www.filmcrave.com/list_genre_movie.php?genre=Family)

For movie reviews and other media-related guidance, visit [www.commonssensemedia.org](http://www.commonssensemedia.org)