

A Beginner's Guide to: PIKE FISHING

Summer 2018



CottageTIPS

MAGAZINE

10 TIPS FOR RENOVATING and SELLING A COTTAGE

PLUS

Blueberry Picking 101

Introduction to Geocaching

**Cottage Buying Guide -
Making Your Wish List**

**Kathy's Cottage Kitchen
Summer Salad**

**HOW TO
REDUCE ROAD
TRIP EXPENSES**

**Save money on gas
and expenses when driving
to the cottage**

EDITOR

Andrew Walker

CONTRIBUTORS

George Ames

Tom Nagy

Kathy Walker

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Dynamite Design

ON THE WEB

CottageTips.com



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Dock Spider Horror



A storm blew threw our little piece of cottage paradise one humid July night, setting the stage for a rather unsettling encounter.

At the first sign of dawn, I strolled down to the dock to bail out the old Lund. This is a time-consuming and mindless task, so I tend to daydream when performing the chore and didn't pay much attention as I reached over to grab the dock cleat for support.

Unfortunately, a dock spider had placed her large egg sac amongst the coils of the rope and my hand plunged straight into the nest. The moment I felt the sticky substance, I knew what I had done.

Hundreds of tiny spiders burst out of their protective shield and onto my fingers. Instinctively, I thrust my hand into the water, and then glanced back at the scene to discover eight-legged wonders now covered the rope. The mother spider had also emerged, staring at me with hate in her eight glaring eyes. She had been guarding her young, and those giant fangs eagerly awaited the chance to get even.

Dock spiders are fascinating creatures and they play an important role in the cycle of nature at the cabin. In this particular instance, however, my appreciation for our cottage companion was less than ecstatic.

Every time I think about the experience, I shudder.

Andrew Walker

editor@cottagetips.com



Table of Contents

SUMMER 2018



10 TIPS FOR RENOVATING AND SELLING A COTTAGE

p12 Fixing up and selling property is certainly done all the time on TV, but that's usually with houses. Can the same principles be applied to a cottage?



INTRODUCTION TO GEOCACHING

p6 Geocaching is the modern treasure-hunt game that is both educational and entertaining for friends and family. It's time to give it a try at the lake!



REDUCE ROAD TRIP EXPENSES

p10 Cottage trips can be expensive, so we need to make the commute to the lake as efficient as possible.



PIKE FISHING FOR BEGINNERS

p20 Top tricks and techniques for catching northern pike, as well as a few essential gear tips.



SUMMER SALAD

p7 Kathy Walker has been crafting lakeside meals for more than 40 years, using everything from camping gear to antique cooking pots to create her fantastic dishes.

Plus

Blueberry Picking 101 8 Growing Mushrooms at the Cottage 18
Creating a Wish List for Your Ideal Cottage 14

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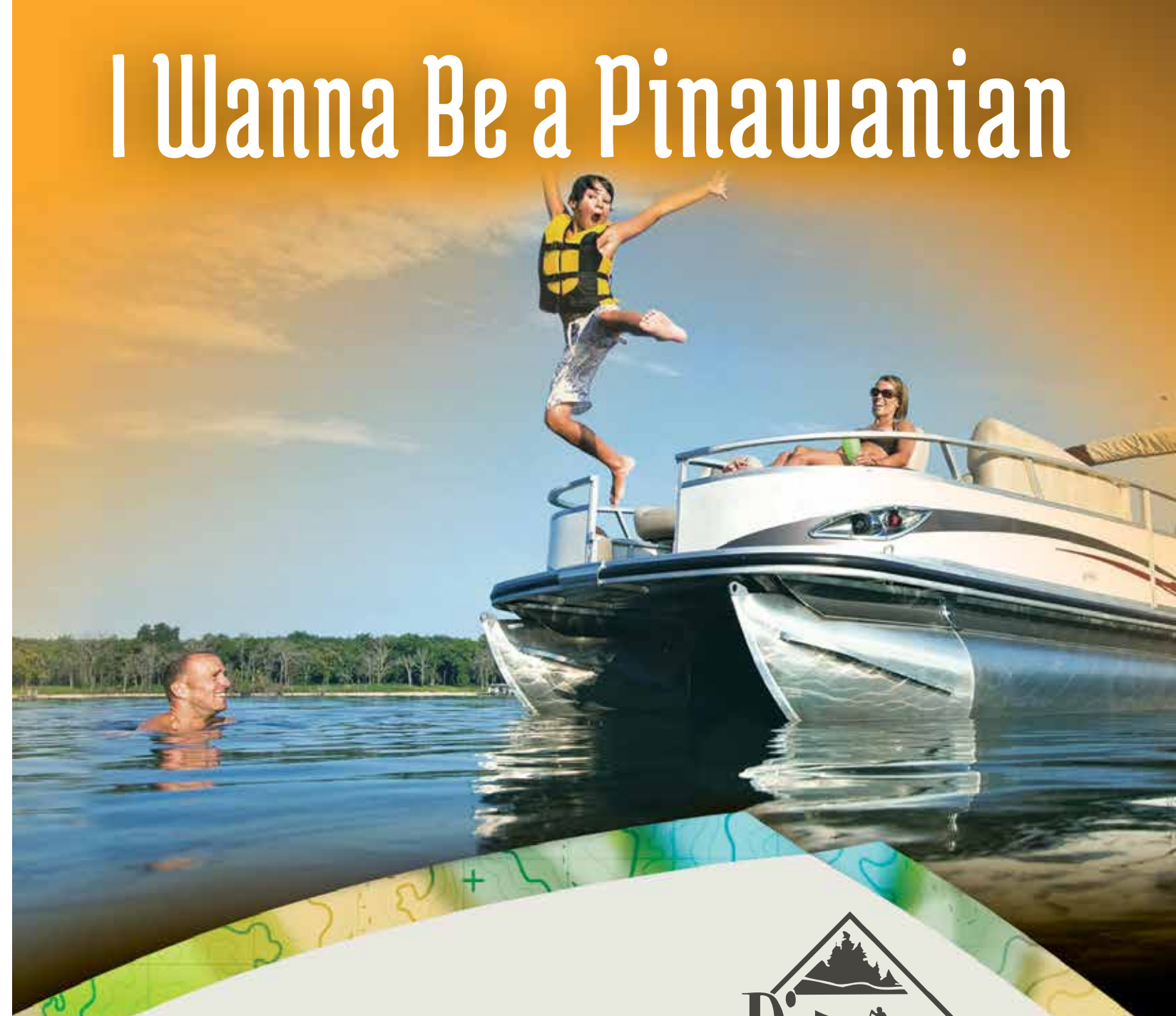
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Introduction to Geocaching



By Cottage Tips Staff

GEOCACHING BASICS

Geocaching is a great way to pass the time and teach the family important navigation skills at the cottage. Participants use a GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver or mobile device to help them locate a carefully hidden target item. The prize is often located in a difficult-to-find place, which for cottagers could be on a local island or somewhere in the woods around the cabin.

The organizer provides the GPS coordinates of the “geocache”, and the players or teams use their navigation skills to find the prize. In a traditional geocache game, the object is a waterproof box holding a small logbook and a pencil. Successful geocachers who find the item will record their names and the date they located the geocache. The container may also hold small items that can be exchanged.

TIPS FOR BEGINNER GEOCACHERS

The first step in setting up a cottage geocache is to teach all of the participants how to correctly use a GPS receiver. Take a day or two to use the handheld GPS to map out the cottage property, or certain well-known landmarks on your lake.

Once everyone is comfortable using the device, you can hide your first geocache. In the beginning, keep the cache easy to find and placed in a location that is familiar to all of the participants and close to the cabin.

Always have the geocachers work in teams of at least two people. For safety reasons, no one should ever be alone.

Carry safety kits and extra batteries, watch the weather, and always stay together. As with hiking and boating around the cottage, it is important to take all the required safety precautions.

Geocaching is the modern outdoor treasure-hunt game that is both educational and entertaining for friends and family. It’s time to give it a try at the lake!

Begin the game early in the day. Participants should be able to locate the cache and get back to the cabin well before sunset.

Respect private property. Ensure that participants only have to cross your property or crown land to locate the geocache.

Be mindful of your impact on the environment. Don’t place caches in areas where geocachers will risk damaging sensitive natural habitats.

Ensure that everyone leaves the area exactly as they found it. In fact, you can incorporate garbage pick-ups into the game.

GEOCACHING FOR LARGE GROUPS

Geocaching is great for weekend reunions, group retreats, or even the

entire cottage community at your lake. Place numbered cards into the geocache container. Instruct the participants to remove the cards in the order that they find them. The first team who finds the cache removes and returns card number one. The next team then takes card number two, etc. Prizes can be awarded at the end of the day for the top teams.

ADVANCED GEOCACHING

Once everyone is comfortable using the GPS receivers to find a single cache, you can begin to set up a multi-cache game. Each cache contains the coordinates for the following cache until the final geocache is located. Depending on the area you have available for the game and the competency of the participants, you can set up as many caches as your time permits.

A puzzle or code can be introduced to the game so that participants have to figure out the coordinates of the geocache box. The puzzles can be located at each stage, or only for decoding the location of the final cache.

When creating the puzzles, make sure that each team is capable of deciphering them correctly. To ensure that everyone gets the proper coordinates, make each team check in at the cabin to confirm that they have the correct directions before searching for the next geocache.

Summer Salad

Adding a few berries and some passion fruit to your salad is a tasty way to impress your family and guests at the cottage.

This salad is simple to prepare, goes well with any meal, and lends itself to a wide range of variations.

Preparation Time: 20 Minutes
Serves: 4-6 people

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head of red leaf lettuce
- 1 spring mix of specialty lettuce (quart size found in any produce dept.)
- 1 pint of fresh blueberries
- 1 pint of fresh raspberries
- 1 can of mandarin orange segments
- 1 generous serving of sliced almonds
- 1 bottle of poppy seed dressing or raspberry vinaigrette dressing

THE GEAR YOU NEED

Large bowl

HOW TO PREPARE THE SUMMER SALAD

Wash and dry the red leaf lettuce and spring mix of specialty lettuce.

Wash and prepare the fruit.

Mix the lettuce, fruit, and dressing in a large bowl.

Add the sliced almonds on top.

To make this into a meal, you can barbecue some chicken breasts and serve the chicken in strips over the salad in a bowl or on a plate.

SPECIAL TIP:

Dried cranberries are a great addition or substitute when fresh berries are not available. Apples, blackberries, strawberries, walnuts, or mangoes can also be used to make different versions of this salad. You can even throw in a bit of goat cheese.

Remember, the cabin is the perfect place to experiment with summer recipes!

Blueberry Picking 101

The best techniques to pick blueberries at the cottage involve maximizing your berries, minimizing bug bites, and avoiding bears.

By Cottage Tips Staff

FAMILY TRADITION

Picking blueberries is certainly a family tradition at many cottages, but berry picking can be backbreaking, bug-infested work. Sometimes, you might even ask yourself why you bother to brave the swarms of mosquitoes and pesky deer flies.

This says nothing of the fact that it is highly possible you could encounter a bear.

Yet, every season we seem to once again organize the gang and search out our secret blueberry patch.

BLUEBERRY PICKING TECHNIQUE

The best container to use when picking blueberries is an empty plastic peanut butter jar. Ripe blueberries will fall off the plant as soon as they are touched. To make sure you get as many of the berries as possible, simply place the plastic jar under the berries and using your forefinger and thumb, gently roll the blueberries off the plant and into the container.

This technique not only catches the most berries, it is also a good system for minimizing the amount of leaves, twigs, insects, and unripe

berries that often find their way into the jar. Once your container is almost full, secure the lid and head back to the central collection pail.

Using the lid ensures you won't spill the blueberries if you stumble on a rock. We don't want to lose all the fruits of our hard labour.

Back at the cottage, fill the jar, pail, or bucket with water and stir the blueberries around. This will normally bring the unwanted green berries to the surface where they are easily removed. Leave the berries in the water for at least five minutes, stirring them occasionally. Not only does this serve to clean

them, it also takes care of any bugs that might have hitched a ride.

Pour the berries into a strainer and rinse them one more time. Remove any remaining leaves, twigs, insects, or unwanted berries.

Place the berries in a bowl. You can certainly eat them right away, but allowing them to dry for a few days often brings out a stronger flavour.

WHERE TO FIND BLUEBERRIES

The best places to locate and collect blueberries are often tightly guarded secrets in many cottage communities. For first-time blueberry pickers, there are a few tips to help you find your own blueberry patch.

Blueberries are normally found in deforested open areas or near shield rock formations that get lots of sunshine. The best time of year to find blueberries is generally the last two weeks of July, but seasonal variations can occur.

In cottage country these spots are often found on islands, beside roads, or in areas that have been cleared. Power-line routes are also worth checking.

If you are exploring the lake, look for islands that have large areas of exposed rock, and head for the highest point. Be sure to check if the island is privately owned before you go ashore and begin the search.

Blueberry plants can be found in a variety of sizes depending on the conditions in which they are growing. Some grow like a small bush close to the ground while others stretch out like a plant and become quite tall, as high as a couple of feet. When picking blueberries from plants that are low to the ground, always lift the small branches to check for hidden berries. The best and biggest blueberries are often found this way, as the weight of the ripe blueberries will cause the branch to droop and conceal the fruit.

FREEZING BLUEBERRIES

If you prefer to freeze the blueberries, make sure they are dry before you put them in the freezer. To keep the berries from sticking together or getting crushed, it is more effective (and time consuming) to lay them out in sheets of one-berry-high rows. This is useful if you plan to use them individually at a later date. Blueberries that are frozen in a big batch are perfect for blending and make an awesome addition to a cottage smoothie.

BLUEBERRY PICKING TOOL

If you are planning to pick an enormous amount of berries or you are fortunate enough to find a blueberry patch that is absolutely loaded with fruit, you may want to use a special hand-held blueberry picker.

EATING BLUEBERRIES

Blueberries are known for having a variety of health benefits. They are widely accepted as the top fruit for containing antioxidants, and studies have shown that blueberries might help reduce the risk of certain diseases that affect the brain.

Raw blueberries go great with oatmeal, granola, and ice cream. They are also perfect additions for a light summer salad.

Using your fresh blueberries to make muffins and cupcakes is a fantastic baking idea for a Saturday afternoon at the cottage. If you have more time, the berries can be used to make blueberry jam.

Blueberry wine, vinegar, and tea are also popular options.

BLUEBERRY PICKING CLOTHING

Insects and blueberry patches tend to go hand-in-hand. The best clothing for picking

blueberries is a pair of loose jeans, thick socks, rubber boots, and a loose hoodie. If you have a long-sleeve shirt instead of a hooded sweatshirt, be sure to also wear a hat. The rubber boots are useful if the ground is damp, or if the area has a high tick population.

BEARS, BUGS, AND SUNBURNS

Bears rely heavily on berries for their summer diet and they will spend hours on end lapping up juicy blueberries. When taking the gang out to your favourite blueberry spot, spend a few moments when you arrive to survey the area for evidence that the bears have recently visited the patch. It is also a good idea to wear bear bells when walking to and from the blueberry picking area, as well as during the time you are collecting the fruit.

The last thing you want to do is interrupt a mother black bear with her young ones.

Insect repellent with a high concentration of DEET is a must when you prepare to head out picking blueberries. Mosquitoes and deer flies can drive you mad and will impact the time you can spend collecting the berries as well as the number of berries you will harvest.

Sunburn and dehydration are big concerns when picking berries. Always bring water to drink. Be sure to wear a hat and apply sunscreen to all exposed areas of your skin, especially on the back of your neck.



How to Reduce Road Trip Expenses

By Cottage Tips Staff

Follow these simple tips to reduce costs when driving to the cottage.

TIRE AIR PRESSURE

Check the air pressure in your tires. Fuel efficiency drops considerably when the tire pressure is below the level recommended by the manufacturer. The tires should all be inflated to the proper pressure level. Check the pressure again before you plan to return home. Also make sure the spare is in good shape and ready for action.

SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE

Get the vehicle serviced. If you are due for a tune-up, have it done before you start the summer cottage road trips. Oil changes, filter cleaning, new tires, new brakes, new wipers, new spark plugs, etc. all have an impact on the performance of your vehicle.

AVOID TRAFFIC

Avoid traffic jams. The constant stop and go process of driving through traffic is not only stressful, it also causes unnecessary wear and tear

on the vehicle and burns through more fuel. Consider leaving very early in the morning or late at night.

AVOID OVERLOAD

Minimize the weight your car is forced to carry. Organize your cottage weekend gear and then do a triage to remove the items that are not really needed so that you take only what is absolutely necessary. The heavier the load, the more expensive the trip, as the car has to work much harder to carry all the extra weight. Consider buying your food and beverages in the town nearest to your cottage rather than bringing it all from home.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAR

If you normally drive the SUV to the lake but don't need the extra space or towing capacity, take your smaller car instead. It is much better on gas. Why would you waste all that extra money on fuel if you don't need to?

In some cases, car rental companies give great deals on weekend rates. The money you save on gas by not taking the big SUV might cover the cost of the rental.

DON'T RUSH

Drive the speed limit. The extra fuel consumption isn't worth the perceived benefit of arriving a few minutes early. You might be excited and eager to get to the cabin as soon as possible, but the fish will still be there if you take your time, and the money you save on gas will pay for the bait. A speeding ticket not only adds significantly to your travel costs, it also eats up all the valuable time you thought you were going to gain by driving quickly.

CRUISE CONTROL

If your vehicle comes with cruise control you should use it. Driving at a constant speed is more efficient than accelerating to pass slower vehicles and then slowing down to avoid the speed traps. Set your cruise control at the speed limit and don't play with it.

WATCH FOR DEER

Watch for animals on the road in rural areas. Deer and moose have a habit of ruining a trip to the cottage. Passengers should help the driver spot any wildlife along the side of the road. If you plan to drive at night or in the early morning, you have to be especially careful. Even a smaller animal, such as a raccoon, groundhog, or fox can cause you to lose control if you hit one.

PLAN PIT STOPS

Taking a few moments to stretch and get some air is important, but you should combine refueling stops with bathroom breaks and plan them out before you start the trip. Every extra stop wastes more gas and uses up valuable time. Fill the gas tank and empty the bladder before you hit the road.

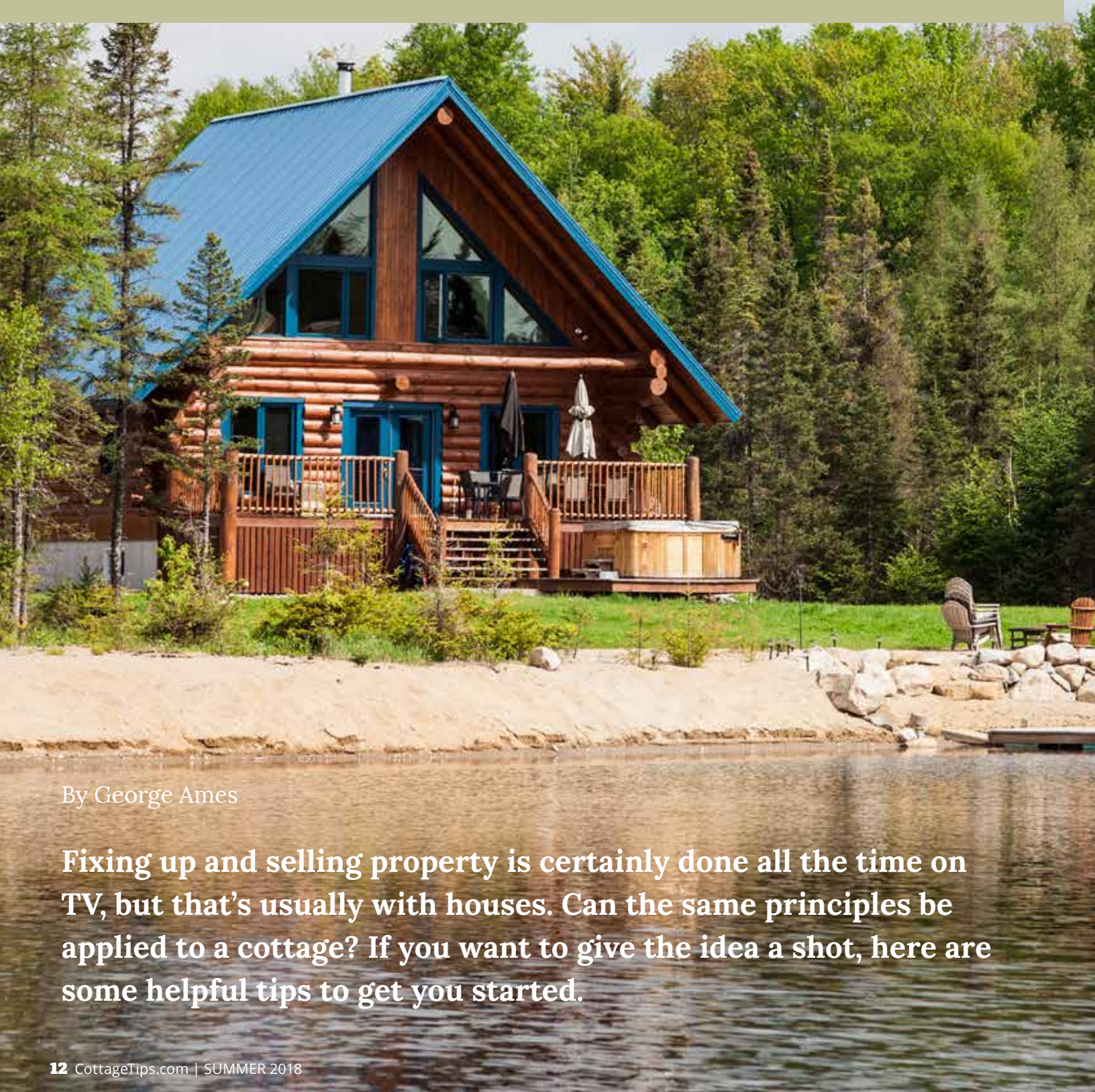
BYO FOOD

Bring lunch and snacks with you. If you are not crossing the border, pack a healthy lunch for the road trip. As tempting as the french-fry truck might be, stopping for fast food on the highway is expensive, time consuming, and unhealthy. Juices and water are a better idea than soda if you want to keep the sugar and caffeine levels of the passengers at a low level.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Reducing gas costs and travel expenses when you drive to the cottage just requires a bit of extra planning. The reward is certainly worth the effort, and the few hundred dollars you save each year can be used for more enjoyable things.

10 TIPS FOR RENOVATING AND SELLING A COTTAGE



By George Ames

Fixing up and selling property is certainly done all the time on TV, but that's usually with houses. Can the same principles be applied to a cottage? If you want to give the idea a shot, here are some helpful tips to get you started.

1. BUY SMART Look for a cottage that has unrealized potential. Is there a neglected property on your lake that hasn't been used for years? Ideally, you want to find an end-of-season fixer-upper. You are taking a financial risk, so it is important to acquire the cottage at a price that will give you room to address surprises and still turn a profit.

2. ARRANGE FINANCING If you can't buy and renovate using a healthy nest egg, then you need outside help. Will the seller give you a 6-12 month mortgage? Will a family member give you temporary credit? If not, you need bank financing. This normally requires a good financial history, back-up collateral, or help from a co-signer. A detailed plan showing the lender all your projected numbers would certainly help secure the funding.

3. UNDERSTAND THE MARKET Realtors say the majority of cottage buyers want a place that needs very little repair or renovation. After all, in today's pricey cottage market, most buyers are upwardly mobile couples that just want to "relax" at their dream lakeside haven. These are likely your ideal candidates on the resale, so give them a ready-to-go beauty!

4. IMPROVE CURB APPEAL Although there may be numerous improvements that you might want to make, the potential buyers must get a strong initial impression when they first drive up in the car, or boat. Certainly no peeling paint, curled up shingles, or badly outdated windows. Add some outside vibrant color touches, and maybe a few timberframe posts and arches,

which are really the rave these days. Consider new siding and fascia/soffit trim, if necessary. This can make a very positive impression. Replace shabby screens, trim tree growth, and do whatever else you can to give the place a great look from the outside.

5. ENHANCE THE WATER VIEW So very important. People want a view to die for, so do whatever it takes to open up that lake view from inside the cottage. Consider everything from removing excess shrubbery and eyesores, to improving the dock situation. Maybe even a better window package, if you can fit that into your budget.

6. WATCH THE BUDGET It is often difficult to forecast and stick to your budget, but this is crucial. Here's where knowing local cottage values becomes very important. How much can you spend on renovations and still make a decent profit upon resale? Investigate this by checking out online listings of area cottages, and if you are not going to do all the repairs yourself, have local contractors give you estimates on the bigger jobs.

7. RENOVATE STRATEGICALLY This can be a little tricky, but the old adage is that kitchens and bathrooms are very much key. So, concentrate on sprucing up those two areas. Discard old carpeting and even paint the floors in areas where coverings are not crucial. Get rid of clutter, old decor and outdated furniture that was collected by the previous owner. You want bright, open, eye-pleasing spaces. Maybe even a better fridge and stove, new or used. Consider new wall decor

in the living room. How about a ship's wheel?

8. IMPROVE THE SHORELINE What can you do here? Besides dock decisions, there has to be some other landscape improvements. If permitted, a few truckloads of beach sand can make a huge difference. Removing shallow weeds might also help. Add a gazebo or picnic table. Keep that grass cut for viewings!

9. ADVERTISE YOUR FINISHED PRODUCT OK, hopefully it's now spring, since that's usually the prime time to get top dollar for a cottage. How do you best sell your renovated project? Cottages often sell privately. It can be listed for free through online sites if you have the confidence to sell it yourself. Be prepared to defend your asking price with solid paperwork showing other comparable local listings. You can also go through a listing company, which charges a flat fee and will help you with the sales contract. If selling is not your strength, don't be shy to negotiate a favourable commission with a local realtor.

10. HAVE PATIENCE You will need some of this for sure, as there will be surprises, delays, and some anxious moments until you get your final cheque. Your friendly lawyer will help you review both your purchase and sale contracts BEFORE you sign them, and will answer other questions you may have. Remember, the satisfaction of completing this project is what it is all about. There should be a nice financial reward involved, but you will also have the pleasure of recounting the whole experience to friends and family for years to come.

Creating a Wish List for Your Ideal Cottage

By Cottage Tips Staff

In the last issue we covered the importance of getting the financing straight before you begin the process. Now we start to get into the fun stuff! Once you have a solid financial plan for buying your cottage, it is time to sit down and decide exactly how you want to use your property. Be both specific and realistic. This will help you narrow down your options and allow you to spend your time looking at cottages that come the closest to meeting your expectations. Here are some of the key things to consider when you plan to buy a cottage.

ROAD ACCESS, WATER ACCESS, AND WINTER ACCESS

Road-access properties that are accessible year-round are in high demand, as they are easier to reach, can be used as a full-time residence, and can generate rental income in the winter months. They also tend to be the most expensive.

The next step down the convenience scale is a property you can drive to for most of the year, but might not be accessible during the winter due to unfavourable road conditions.

The third option is a water-access property, which is certainly a less-convenient way to go, but these cottages tend to offer the most privacy and many people dream of living on an island. In this situation, it's all about trade-offs. The remote location means the time you can spend at the cabin could be as short as five months of the year, which is why these cottages are often less expensive. Water-access

properties also tend to be more rustic, with limited amenities.

ELECTRICITY OR OFF-GRID

Being connected to the grid makes a world of difference at a cottage, but the convenience comes at a price, both in the cost of the property and the utility charges. Depending on the location, heating the cabin using electricity can result in scary bills and you have to plan for rising service fees.

Advancements in solar technology are making it easier to get essential power at off-grid properties, but an investment is still required, so you need to do your homework.

Comfortable camping is certainly still an option and is definitely the cheapest way to get on the lake.

PHONE AND INTERNET

Until recently, you pretty much needed a landline service at the cottage to have reliable communication with the rest of

the world. Again, technology is changing and it is becoming easier to stay connected from more remote locations.

If you plan to work from the cottage, or can't survive without access to the web, it is important to include this in the filtering process.

TURN-KEY, BUILDINGS ONLY, OR LAND ONLY

People with sufficient funds and limited free time often prefer to walk into a place that is ready to use on day one.

Handyman types can save some money and buy a fixer-upper. This option allows you to spread out the costs as you slowly renovate over time.

Buying a lot is also an option as it gives you 100% control over creating your ideal cottage. Construction costs can be high, especially on water-access locations, so be ready for some sticker shock.

continued on page 20



COTTAGE BUYING GUIDE CONT.



ISOLATED OR PART OF A COMMUNITY

A cottage means different things to different people. Some families want to be alone with nature, while others use the lakeside retreat as their social hub.

Knowing what’s right for your situation is important before you decide to buy.

DISTANCE FROM HOME

Are you comfortable with a half-day or full-day commute? If you have limited holidays, a shorter commute is important, as most of your cottage time will likely be on weekends. Retirees, teachers, shift-workers, or work-from-home types, however, have more flexibility and can consider a place that is father from the city.

SHORELINE PREFERENCE

Deep-water shorelines, shallow and rocky shorelines, and shallow and sandy shorelines all have benefits and some negative points to consider.

Swimming is great when you have deep water off the shore or the dock, as you don’t have to worry about weeds. Families with young kids might prefer a shallow-water shoreline, or even one with a beach. These options tend to be safer and children can learn a lot while exploring, especially if you let the shoreline area grow wild.

Be sure to get the scoop on changing water levels, as this can have a huge impact on how you access or use the waterfront part of your property.

FOREST OR YARD

If you envision yourself sitting on the porch and watching the deer, wolves, bears, and foxes stroll by, a place in the woods might be your thing. Otherwise, cottages on cleared properties with large lawns are great for outdoor games.

NEIGHBOURS

Privacy needs are important to consider. If you don’t like the idea of reaching over and clinking coffee

cups with your cottage neighbours every morning, or listening to their music every weekend, be sure to look for a property that meets your social and noise expectations.

LAKE TYPE

Big lakes offer fantastic boating opportunities. Small lakes or river systems might be more restrictive, but can provide calmer conditions for canoeing and fishing. A private lake, if you can find it, makes an ideal artist retreat.

TOILETS

It’s important to have an honest conversation with the family about the type of toilet you need at the cottage. If you plan to entertain large groups, the outhouse option is not practical. Composting toilets solve the problem of having to leave the cottage at night, but still have their limits. A septic system can handle higher volumes, but is expensive to install, and requires diligent maintenance.

WATER SUPPLY

Access to bathing and drinking water has to be considered when buying your cottage.

Are you going to bring in your own drinking water if the water from the well or lake isn’t to your liking?

Convenience is also important. Do you plan to shower indoors, outdoors, or sing in the rain?

BEDROOMS


Many cottages come with a guest cabin or a bunkhouse for the kids and guests. This might be very important for you, or not an issue.

FEELING STRESSED?

If you are feeling a bit overwhelmed, don’t worry, everything will be fine.

This process is simply designed to save some time and headaches, as it encourages you and your family to prioritize needs and wants when searching for the perfect lakeside retreat.

In the end, the road to cottage ownership is an adventure, and creating your wish list is one of the important early steps.



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GROWING MUSHROOMS AT THE COTTAGE

By Tom Nagy

Mushrooms are certainly no strangers to cottage owners or nature enthusiasts.

Often emerging seemingly overnight following spring or autumn rains and vanishing just as quickly as they appear, fungi have earned themselves a mysterious reputation that captivates the imagination and the curiosity of the human spirit.

The more bold and adventurous of us have even taken up the challenge of foraging for wild edible and medicinal mushrooms, choosing instead to actively engage with and participate in the natural world rather than remain satisfied as passive observers.

To the rest of us that have yet to develop such an intimate relation with the world of fungi, mushrooms appear foreign and almost alien.

On the contrary, not only can mushrooms be confidently identified and appreciated by almost everyone, most people are largely unaware that many fungi can also be tamed, domesticated and cultivated just like lettuce, tomatoes, hostas or peonies. Mushrooms are not only totally within our grasp to understand, their unique skills and talents can be harnessed to both nourish and heal right in our own backyards or at the cottage, if we choose to open ourselves up and learn their ways.

To start, this path of discovery involves demystifying fungi and uncovering what they really are. Mushrooms are the reproductive structures of fungi, which are largely comprised of filamentous strands known as hyphae. These hyphae grow and expand to form a vast, interconnected network known as mycelium. This mycelium, which grows and expands largely undetected in the soil underneath our feet, among rotting leaves on the forest floor

There is a whole host of suitable species of edible and medicinal mushrooms that are remarkably easy to grow and tolerate a wide variety of conditions.

and inside stumps and branches, makes up the body of the fungus.

Under the right conditions, such as after a deep, soaking rain or once the cool evenings of autumn begin to set in, the mycelium of countless species of fungi are triggered to produce their fruiting bodies, which push their way up and through the soil or between the cracks and crevices in bark. These mushrooms or toadstools are often the only parts of the fungal organism that are revealed to the outside world and are almost as varied in color and form,

as there are stars in the sky.

Cultivating fungi is remarkably similar to gardening or tending a vegetable plot and integrates well with these activities. Since fungi are essential decomposers in terrestrial environments, they make a living from breaking down and decomposing the organic refuse of nature, whether that be straw, sawdust, wood chips or leaf litter, and in the process create healthy soil that can be used to nourish the next generation of life.

There is a whole host of suitable species of edible and medicinal mushrooms that are remarkable easy to grow and tolerate a wide variety of conditions. Some are annual species while others are perennial, overwintering outdoors and yielding bountiful crops of beautiful, delicious mushrooms every few weeks throughout the growing season.

Some species can be grown in beds of wood chips on the edges of gardens while others are more at home growing inside logs or stumps, making them ideal for the cabin. Others still, thrive in buckets of sawdust sitting on porches, verandas or inside gazebos.

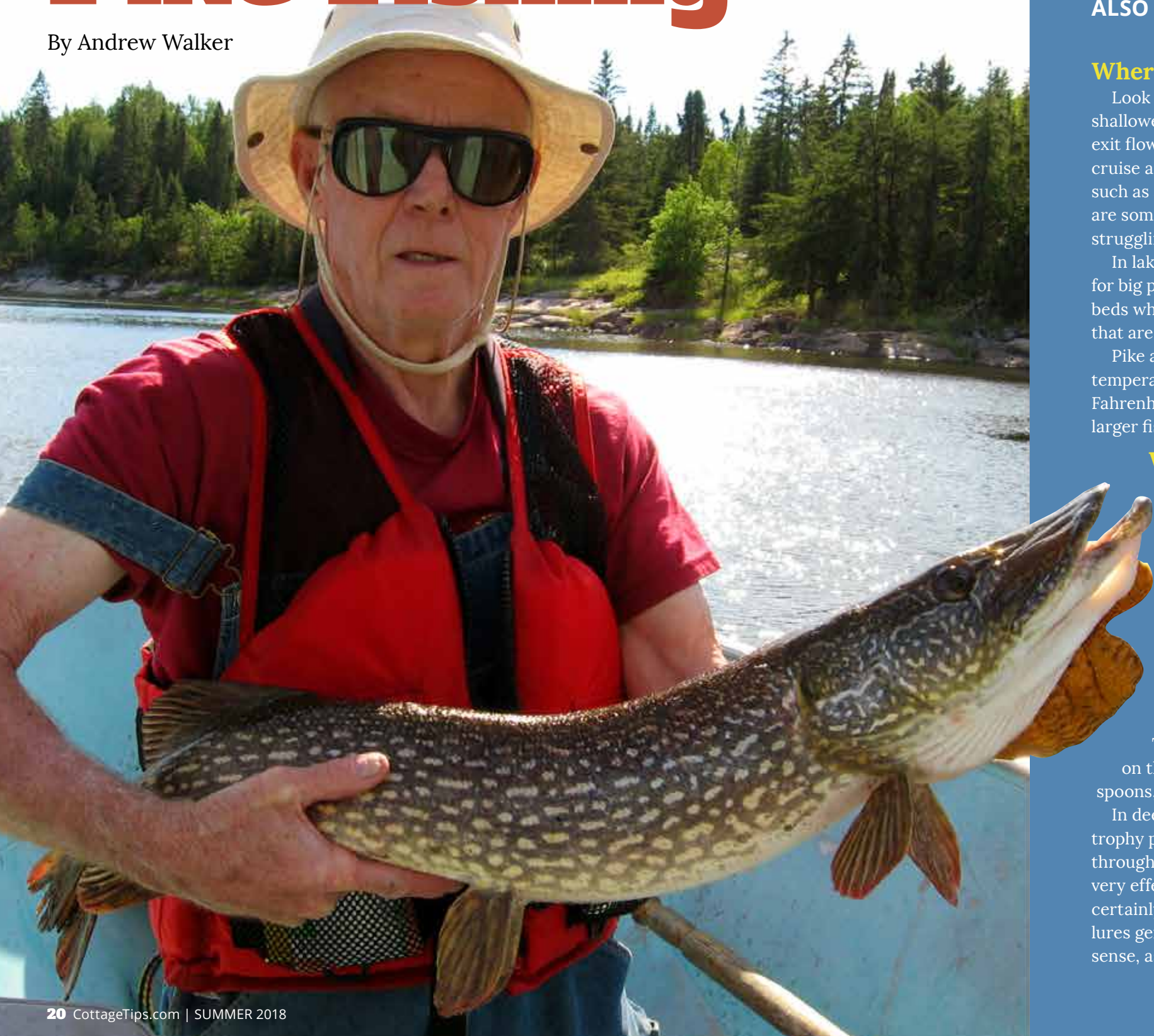
The world of mushroom growing is relatively young and largely unexplored, opening up the potential for new discoveries, years of enjoyable harvests and a perfect addition to more unforgettable meals and experiences at the cottage.



Tom Nagy is an ecologist, seasoned forager and mushroom growing enthusiast from Hamilton, Ontario. He delivers passionate and engaging programs and workshops on organic agriculture, foraging for wild edible and medicinal plants, natural fermentation and mushroom cultivation. He contributes informative and entertaining articles to a number of annual and seasonal publications and produces quality mushroom spawn locally in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He can be reached at his website www.barefoot-foods.com, on [Facebook](#) or on [Instagram as nagthompson](#).

A Beginner's Guide to: Pike Fishing

By Andrew Walker



NORTHERN PIKE ARE ABUNDANT AND AGGRESSIVE PREDATORS FOUND IN A VARIETY OF WATER CONDITIONS IN COTTAGE COUNTRY. SOME ANGLERS SEE THEM AS A NUISANCE, WHILE OTHERS ACTIVELY PURSUE THE VORACIOUS HUNTER, ALSO KNOWN AS A JACKFISH.

Where do you find trophy pike?

Look for rocky points, drop-offs leading into shallower bays, runs between islands, and entry or exit flows joining bodies of water. Trophy pike tend to cruise around these areas searching for an easy meal, such as a weak or injured fish, which is why big pike are sometimes caught when an angler is reeling in a struggling walleye, bass, or a smaller pike.

In lakes with shallow water and numerous bays, look for big pike to hang out around the fringe of the weed beds where they can pick off perch, walleyes, or bass that are feeding on the smaller fish in the vegetation.

Pike are commonly found in all ranges of water temperature, but 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit), is apparently the ideal condition for the larger fish.

Where do you find and catch smaller pike?

Young northern pike are found near weed beds and in shallow bays where they can feed on minnows, crayfish, and smaller fish. They tend to be ambush feeders and will wait patiently in a fixed position in the weeds or under a dock until an unsuspecting meal passes in front of their nose.

Techniques For Catching Northern Pike

The best bait to use for northern pike depends on the habitat, but pike are regularly caught on spoons, spinners, and live baits.

In deep water, a popular strategy for catching a trophy pike involves trolling parallel to the shore or through the narrows between islands. Spoons can be very effective lures in this situation. Large pike have certainly been caught on small baits, but the bigger lures generally produce the monster fish. This makes sense, as trophy pike found in water deeper than fifteen

Special Gear Tips

Pike tend to be a bit slimy and have strong jaws lined with razor-sharp teeth. To make your life easier, and minimize potential injuries to the fish, it's a good idea to invest in a fish glove, needle nose pliers, and a mouth spreader. Polarized fishing glasses are also helpful for pike fishing because they allow you to see what is going on below the surface of the water.

feet prefer to feed on somewhat larger prey. Older pike can have enormous mouths, and are easily capable of taking prey weighing more than two pounds. Any lure that resembles an injured bass, walleye, or smaller pike is ideal.

In shallow water, when you are fishing for big pike from a fixed position or by slowly working a shoreline, cast your lure in a high arc. Near the end of the cast, restrict your line so that the lure lands in the water with a loud "smack"!

Big pike are attracted to the disturbance and will investigate when the lure makes a noise as it hits the water. Be ready! If a large northern pike is anywhere near the spot where the lure landed, the fish will often attack the bait immediately. Large spoons and spinner baits are useful all season.

If the water is deep enough, let a spoon sink for a few seconds before starting to retrieve it after the cast. The pike will often take the lure as it is sinking into the weeds or past an underwater overhang. As you reel in the lure, jerk it once in a while and let it fall back for a second or two before continuing the retrieve. If a big pike is following the bait, it will sometimes strike when the lure starts to sink. Quickly cast back to the same spot if you get a bite but the pike lets go, even if it is right beside the dock or boat. Big pike are known to take a few test whacks at a lure before they decide to eat it. If a fish follows the lure or misses it on a fake bite, it will usually remain in the same area and you can often get the pike to hit the lure on the next cast.

Late-summer pike

In August, when the weeds are high, big northern pike located in shallow water can also be caught using top-water lures and floating stick baits. Always keep your eyes on the lure as you are retrieving it. Big pike will often follow a lure right until the last moment before you pull it out of the water. If you are watching carefully, you will see the fish and might be able to coax it into taking the bait.



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