
NEWS RELEASE

**Louisiana
Department of State**



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SMITHSONIAN TRAVELING EXHIBIT COMING TO LOUISIANA'S OLD STATE CAPITOL

These are the perennial signs of a suburban summer: the smell of hot dogs on the grill, the sound of a mower on a Saturday afternoon, pool parties and get-togethers on the patio. Secretary of State Tom Schedler and the staff of Louisiana's Old State Capitol are proud to announce the arrival of the Smithsonian traveling exhibit, "Patos, Pools, & the Invention of the American Backyard" to Louisiana's Old State Capitol. The exhibit, on display through Nov. 28, explores the evolution from the front porch to the outdoor living room.

Through rare photographs, historic drawings, vintage artifacts and period advertisements, the exhibit features the mid-century backyard of the 1950s from the rise of the suburbs and tract houses and the beauty of post-war garden design to the birth of the environmental movement. Drawing from the collections and research of the Smithsonian Gardens' Archives of American Gardens, the exhibit is organized for travel by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES).

In the 1950s, America was a nation emerging from the shadow of World War II, searching for ways to enjoy its newfound peace and prosperity. Post-war trends such as the baby boom, a growing middle class, the do-it-yourself concept and a dramatic rise in home ownership remade much of the U.S. and contributed to the development of the suburban backyard. The mid-century backyard became an extension of the house, a room designed for relaxing, recreation and entertaining. Private backyard pools were an affordable luxury for many, and the patio became the perfect place for a backyard grill and patio furniture made with new materials like plastic and aluminum.

The Old State Capitol Associates will sponsor an opening reception and talk by Dr. Neil Odenwald, retired professor and former director of the LSU School of Landscape Architecture. The public reception will take place on Sept. 23 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. with a discussion on "The Backyard" beginning at 6:15 p.m. There is no charge for admission to the reception.

Louisiana's Old State Capitol is located at 100 North Blvd. in downtown Baton Rouge. The museum is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tours are free of charge.

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