

Clean, clear water

By Tara Marion

Cleaning a pool is like cleaning a house, according to Kay Roodbergen, owner of Roodbergen Pools & Spas, 2303 Ramona Ave. “When it’s dirty, you have to clean it, and if your house gets dirty faster than mine, then you’re going to clean more often than I do,” she explained.

Most people clean their pools on a weekly basis, however it depends on how much debris ends up in it at any given time.

According to Vicki Wedel, co-owner of Michigan Swim Pool Inc., 5977 Portage Road, “if there’s a real windstorm or you have a big party, you may need to clean it immediately after that.

Maintaining a pool involves keeping it clean and chemically balanced. Without an automatic pool cleaner, this means skimming, vacuuming and brushing.

Roodbergen suggested skimming debris from your pool while it’s still floating, because it’s easier than hauling out the vacuum cleaner. “It’s much easier to skim it off the top than to wait until it falls to the floor. And it always looks dirtier when it’s down at the bottom,” she said.

Brushing the debris from the shallow end to the deep end decreases the time you spend vacuuming, because then you’ll only need to vacuum the deep end.

Liners affect the cleanliness of your pool as well. According to Roodbergen, concrete pools are porous, which can make them more difficult to clean, especially if algae begin to grow.

She also noted an above-ground pool requires more cleaning than an in-ground pool because the circulation isn’t as good, although she offered a suggestion for improving it.

“The more people use their pool, the cleaner it stays—because they’re moving everything around that’s in the water,” she said. “When the equipment’s running, it’s cleaning the water.”

Another part of maintaining a pool is keeping it chemically balanced. “The main purpose of the chemicals is to disinfect the water,” Wedel said.

“If you use the granular-based chlorine system, you’re going to add chlorine on a more regular basis,” she said.

Bromine, on the other hand, doesn’t require daily maintenance, although it does require a brominator that automatically dissolves the tablets and dispenses them into the pool as needed.

No matter which chemical system your pool uses, Roodbergen and Wedel agreed that testing the pH of your water with test kits is important.

Using a test kit tells you whether your pool is in balance, as well as how much of the chemicals you need to add.

Roodbergen summed up her ideology on cleaning a pool. “The name of the game is if you keep the chemicals balanced and keep enough chemicals in the pool, you won’t run into problems,” she said.

“It’s when you get careless or lazy that you develop problems and end up incurring more work,” she concluded.