Summertime Thieves Clock In

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Garden proud Brits are being urged to step up outdoor security as the clocks go forward, with valuables such as patio furniture, barbecues and garden tools on the most wanted list for opportunist thieves.

Last summer Lloyds Bank Home Insurance recorded a 12% increase in unforced burglary claims when compared to winter months* with an average claim for unforced burglary costing £900.

According to the latest ONS Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), around 777,000 thefts from outside the home were recorded last year, representing 11% of all recorded property crime.**

The Lloyds Bank Insurance Britain at Home Report*** showed UK households spend an average of £366 every year on garden items, with younger homeowners aged 25-34 spending over twice this, at £747. The most popular outdoor items owned include outdoor furniture (81%), barbecues (49%) and bicycles (37%).

The report also found around a third of homeowners (33%) say they spend more money on their gardens than five years ago, and 34% say they spend more time improving them. However, despite their willingness to spend time and money on their outdoor spaces, over a third (37%) have no secure lock for their garden and a quarter (24%) admit none of their outdoor items are insured.

Tim Downes, senior claims manager at Lloyds Bank Insurance, said: "As the clocks go forward marking the start of British summertime, many households will take this as their cue to pull out the patio furniture and dust off the barbeque.

"We know that the majority of thefts from gardens and sheds are opportunistic, so it is worrying to see so many people leaving themselves exposed by investing in gardens without adequate insurance.

"When it comes to protecting our properties, homeowners must remember that what's on the outside also counts, so taking some small easy steps could help prevent having to stump up for lost garden goods should the worst happen."

Tips from Lloyds Bank Insurance for keeping your gardens safe:

Lock it up: Always ensure garden sheds, gates, garages and outbuildings remain bolted with a secure lock and make sure there are no gaps in fences or bushes for opportunistic thieves to slip through

Please weight: Put bricks or stones in the bottom of patio tubs to make them more difficult for would-be thieves to carry off

Tag it: Mark valuable items, such as patio furniture and ornaments, with your postcode, and keep photos of your garden valuables in case anything is stolen or vandalised

Fortress walls: If you can't block access to you garden by locking a gate, high walls, spiky fences and prickly bushes can make it more difficult to access the garden

Long distance gravel: Filling your driveways or front paths with pebbles or gravel can help you to hear someone approaching your property

Hide and don't seek: Avoid leaving tools, lawnmowers and bicycles in plain view in the garden – always lock them away out of sight. Remember tools and ladders can be used to break in too

Join forces: Look into joining your local Neighbourhood Watch scheme in order to help protect you and your neighbours' properties

www.lloydsbank.com/insurance

Notes to editors

*Lloyds Bank Insurance claims data – Summer months are April – September inclusive

**CSEW 'other household theft',http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_392380.pdf September 2014

***Lloyds Bank Insurance Britain at Home Report, 2000 UK homeowners April 2014

About Lloyds Bank Insurance

Lloyds Bank Home Solutions is underwritten by Lloyds Bank General Insurance Limited and has a 5 Star Defaqto rating. Lloyds Bank Home Options is underwritten by Lloyds Bank General Insurance Limited.

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