

MIKE'S Tool Box

Mike Forner's Home Services:



MY MISSION IS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY BY PROVIDING PROMPT, COMPREHENSIVE, EXPERT HOME MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS. OUR SERVICE IS A FUSION OF HIGH EXPECTATION & EXCELLENCE IN PERFORMANCE.

9 Overlooked Spring Cleaning Jobs

With winter finally leaving and warmer weather on the way, it's time to tackle all that spring-cleaning! It can be a lengthy process but it's important that you don't miss these often-overlooked steps.

Exterior Jobs: Winter can be rough on the exterior of your home. So you should start on the exterior before the spring rains cause more problems.

1. Clean out the gutters of any debris leftover from the winter storms and check to make sure your gutters are still securely fastened.
2. Clear away all the debris from your exterior drains. This will allow the heavy spring rains to properly flow and prevent back ups.
3. Check your windows for any cracking or splitting from the caulk. If so, clean off the mildew and touch-up or replace the caulk.
4. The warming weather will inevitably lead to outdoor entertaining; so don't forget to clean off your patio furniture using a mild soap and warm water. Gently scrub away any dirt that has collected over the winter. If you have wrought iron and rust has started forming, gently sand it off.

Now, wipe off your shoes and head inside.

Interior Jobs:

5. Unplug your refrigerator, slide it away from the wall and vacuum the dust that has accumulated on the condenser coils. This task may seem small, but can greatly extend the life of your refrigerator
6. Vacuum out the dust that is sticking to your air vents. After the vents are clear of dust, apply a thin layer of car wax on all surfaces of the vent to prevent dust from sticking and to allow for easier airflow.

Call in the Pros: There are still a few things left that should be done by professionals.

7. If you built a lot of fires over the winter, have a chimney sweep inspect your chimney and fireplace. This should be done annually to prevent house fires. As a bonus tip, throw a handful of salt into a fire to prevent soot and add some color to the flame!
8. Have a contractor inspect your roof for any missing, warped or loose shingles and check for loose seals on your skylights. While he's at it, have him check all your roof's flashings.
9. Before the weather warms up too much, have your HVAC system inspected by a qualified technician and, if needed, replace your filters.

Now that you've checked these jobs off your list, you can start enjoying the spring!

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Stay tuned for next month's front-page article!

Upcoming Events In May That Might Interest You...

* Friday, May 1st is May Day. May Day marks the halfway point between the first day of spring and the summer solstice.

* Tuesday, May 5th is National Teacher Day. In 1953, an Arkansas teacher wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt about the need to recognize and honor the nation's teachers. Mrs. Roosevelt persuaded Congress to proclaim a day in May as National Teacher Day. National Teacher Day is celebrated on Tuesday of National Teacher Week; this week is observed the first full week of May each year.



* Sunday, May 10th is Mother's Day.



* Saturday, May 16th is Armed Forces Day. A salute to all our men and women in uniform...Thank you for your service!



* Monday, May 25th is Memorial Day. Memorial day is a US holiday to honor and remember those who died while serving in the military...Thank you for your sacrifice!

9 Warning Signs Of Roof Leaks

Your roof may be telling you something. There are various reasons why roofs leak. Here are **9 warning signs** that present reasons for concern during the life of a roof.

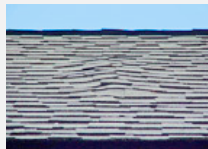
There are also many less obvious items that allow water intrusion which are frequently missed. Small roof leaks cause rotten wood and even mold and mildew just like large leaks do. However, small leaks are frequently not discovered, by the untrained eye, until they are large enough to become obvious. By then complete roof replacement is frequently necessary.

The best way to be certain your roof is in tip-top shape is to have it regularly inspected by an experienced roofing professional.



Warning Sign #1: Algae and Mold

- Occurs most often in warm, humid climates such as the southeast United States
- Caused by growth of airborne fungi or algae deposited on roof
- May not impact overall life of the shingle, but could indicate potential problems



Warning Sign #2: Buckling Shingles

- May be caused by improperly applied felt
- May be caused by movement in the deck of the roof



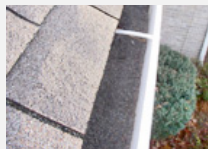
Warning Sign #3: Curling Shingles

- May be caused by water absorption
- May be caused by hot air in the attic
- Does not effectively protect the roof from leaks



Warning Sign #4: Damaged Flashing

- Caused by improper installation (on new roof)
- Caused by drying and cracking (on old roof)
- Can sometimes be repaired without replacing roof



Warning Sign #5: Granule Loss

- Normally a certain number of granules will be loose, especially after application
- On aging shingles, indicates need for replacement



Warning Sign #6: Lack Of Attic Ventilation

- Results in trapped hot air in the attic
- Forces air conditioner to work harder (and possibly break down)
- Bakes the roof's shingles



Warning Sign #7: Missing Shingles

- Caused by storms and high wind speeds
- Usually related to improper fastening of the shingles



Warning Sign #8: Roof Rot

- Caused by absorption of moisture in the mat
- More common with organic-based shingles



Warning Sign #9: Ceiling or Roof Spots

- When water gets through, you may see water stains in your ceiling
- Leaks may appear around chimneys and vents
- Leaks may even 'travel' down rafters and show up away from the original source

Geraniums Of Love

by: Harriet Xanthakos, Chicken Soup for the Soul



As the fifth of seven children, I went to the same public school as my three older sisters and brother. Every year, my mother went to the same pageant and had parent/child interviews with the same teachers. The only thing different was the child. And every child participated in an old school tradition - the annual plant sale held in early May, just in time for Mother's Day.

Third grade was the first time that I was allowed to take part in the plant sale. I wanted to surprise my mother, but I didn't have any money. I went to my oldest sister and shared the secret, and she gave me some money. When I arrived at the plant sale, I carefully made my selection. I agonized over that decision, inspecting each plant to ensure that I had indeed found the best geranium. Once I had smuggled it home, with the help of my sister, I hid it on the upstairs neighbor's porch. I was very afraid my mother would find it

before Mother's Day, but my sister assured me that she wouldn't, and indeed she did not.

When Mother's Day arrived, I was bursting with pride when I gave her that geranium. I remember how bright her eyes were, and how delighted she was with my gift.

The year I was fifteen, my younger sister reached third grade. In early May she came to me full of wonder and secrecy and told me that there was going to be a plant sale at school, and she wanted to surprise our mother. Like my older sister did for me, I gave her some money and off she went. She arrived home full of nervous excitement, the geranium hidden in a paper bag under her sweater. "I looked at every plant," she explained, "and I know I got the best one!"

With a sweet sense of déjà vu, I helped my little sister hide that geranium on the upstairs neighbor's porch, assuring her that our mother would not find it before Mother's Day. I was there when she gave my mother the geranium, and I watched them both bursting with pride and delight. It was like being in a dream I had already dreamed. My mother noticed me watching, and she gave me a soft, secret smile. With a tug at my heart, I smiled back. I had been wondering how my mother could pretend to be surprised at this gift from her sixth child, but as I watched her eyes light up with delight as she was presented with that most precious gift, I knew she was not pretending.



Spinach, Bacon & Onion Dip

Ingredients:

- 4 slices bacon, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced medium
- coarse salt and ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour
- 2 packages (10 ounces each) frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 bar (8 ounces) cream cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan
- Crostini or pita chips, for serving

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium saucepan, cook bacon over medium, stirring occasionally, until browned and crisp, 10 minutes. Drain bacon on paper towels. Discard all but 1 tablespoon fat from pan. Add onion to pan, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 8 minutes. Add flour and cook 30 seconds. Add spinach, milk, sour cream, and cream cheese. Cook, stirring, until cream cheese melts, 2 minutes. Stir in bacon and 1/4 cup Parmesan.
2. Transfer mixture to a 1 1/2-quart baking dish and top with 1/4 cup Parmesan. Bake until bubbling, 14 minutes. Heat broiler and broil until top browns, 3 minutes. Let sit 5 minutes. Serve dip warm with crostini or pita chips.

How To Become A Better Listener: Part 1 & 2

Part 1 of 2: Listening Actively Continued

Avoid distractions. Whether it's a side conversation, your phone, or the cute barista, splitting your attention between the speaker and something else will signal that you're uninterested.

Too often, instead of listening, we like to wait for our turn to speak. Anticipating what the other person is going to say or preparing a rebuttal before they're finished speaking means that you're not actually having a conversation, you're waiting for your turn. Wait to formulate a response until it's appropriate to make one.

Multitasking while you are on the phone seems efficient and harmless if the person can't see you, but distracting yourself with other things

Don't interrupt. Even if someone is saying something you disagree with wildly, keep it civil. Wait for an opportune and tactful moment to voice your disagreement. Listening actively to your uncle's tirade against a politician you support at Thanksgiving will only provide you with the ammunition to thoroughly dismantle it later.

Part 2 of 2: Providing Feedback

Summarize and paraphrase. One of the best ways to signal that you're listening is to periodically repeat what you've been told. Starting sentences with "It sounds like what you're saying is..." or "What I'm hearing is..." will encourage the speaker and it will prove that you've listened to what they've said. This also gives them an opportunity to clarify anything you've misunderstood or transition into your response.

Stay Tuned...



Wise Home Owner Tip: **7 Grilling Safety Tips**

1. Read the owner's manual: Always read the owner's manual before using your grill and follow specific usage, assembly, and safety procedures. Contact the grill manufacturer if you have specific questions. (Be sure to locate your model number and the manufacturer's consumer inquiry phone number and write them on the front page of your manual.)

2. Use in well-ventilated area: Set up your grill in an open area that is away from buildings, overhead combustible surfaces, dry leaves, or brush. Be sure to avoid high traffic areas and always barbecue in a well-ventilated area. Be aware of wind-blown sparks.

3. Keep grill stable: When using a barbecue grill, be sure that all parts of the unit are firmly in place and that the grill is stable (can't be tipped over).

4. Be ready to extinguish flames: Use baking soda to control a grease fire and have a fire extinguisher handy. A bucket of sand or a garden hose should be near if you don't have a commercial extinguisher.

5. Never leave a grill unattended once lit.

6. Stay away from hot grill: Don't allow anyone to conduct activity near the grill when in use or immediately following its use. The grill body remains hot up to an hour after being used.

7. Don't move a hot grill: Never attempt to move a hot grill. It's easy to stumble or drop it and serious burns could result.

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Did You Know...

That Basil is a natural fly repellent? Grow it in pots on windowsills and in doorways to deter flies during the warmer months.

Uplifting Quote of The Month

"And I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free, and I won't forget the men who died, who gave that right to me and I'll proudly stand next to him to defend her still today, 'cuz there ain't no doubt I love this land, God bless the USA."

~ Lee Greenwood

Joke Of The Month

An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years.

He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%.

The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again."

The gentleman replied, "Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times!"