November 2013

MIKE'S Tool Box

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Mike Forner's Home Services:

My mission is to treat your home with the same passion and attention to detail that I use on my own home.

Pest Control Tips for Preventing Infestations in your Home this winter

Pests infest millions of U.S. homes during the winter. Consequently, homeowners spend billions of dollars to get rid of the critters. The best way to prevent an infestation (and save your cash) is to practice natural pest control techniques.

Natural Pest Prevention Tips for the Home

Seal your house. Home weatherization is something you may already do to keep your heating bills low during the winter. In addition to helping the earth and your bank account, sealing your home helps keep out pests. Insects can crawl through cracks as small as a 1/16 inch, so get out your caulking gun, spackle and weather stripping, and seal the exterior of your home. Keep in mind that if air can get through a hole or crack, so can an insect or rodent. Also, replace broken screens and install them over openings such as vents or chimneys.

Maintain your landscape. Your yard makes a statement about your home to humans and pests alike. When the cold weather arrives, get rid of rotten fruits and vegetables from your garden; don't let fallen leaves pile up; prune the bushes and trees on your property; and weed. Pests like to hide in yard debris, so keeping your lawn manicured will prompt them to look elsewhere.

Keep your woodpile high and dry. A good woodpile is located at least 20 feet away from your house, 5 feet off the ground and covered. To practice natural pest control, bring wood into your home only as you need it.

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Stay tuned for next month's frontpage article on cracks in drywall and plaster!

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Upcoming Events In November That Might Interest You…

* Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, November 3rd, 2013.

* Veterans Day on Monday, November 11th, 2013.

*Thanksgiving Day on Thursday, November 28th, 2013.

* University of Michigan Home Football Schedule for October 2013:

When: 11/09/2013
Who: Nebraska
Where: Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, MI
What Time: TBA

When: 11/30/2013
Who: Ohio State
Where: Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, MI
What Time: TBA

Check the Big Ten Network's **Gamefinder** to determine where to find a game in your channel lineup.

Don't feed the pests. Avoid leaving food out in the open. If you don't have to refrigerate it, store food in lidded containers such as those made of tough glass or plastic. Because hungry pests get desperate in the winter, they may gnaw through plastic bags and cardboard to get to the food in your pantry. To prevent such food contamination, keep your dry grains, cereals, crackers, pasta and other stored food items in strong, lidded containers.

Keep a clean home. Cleaning the house can be a pain, but it's better than dealing with a pest infestation. Don't leave dirty dishes in the sink; wipe away crumbs; and vacuum regularly. When storing your seasonal clothes, use plastic bins with tight-fitting lids instead of cardboard boxes to prevent nesting.

Use natural repellants. Plant pest-repelling plants, like mint or spearmint, around the exterior of your home to make it smell bad to unwanted guests. A local landscaper can tell you which plants grow best in your area. Because some of these plants may not grow during the winter, you can make a spray repellant with safe, natural ingredients. For example, mix mashed garlic or essential spearmint oil with water and spray the mixture around the exterior of your home.

When to Call a Professional

While natural pest control techniques are effective, they won't make your home impenetrable. In some instances, you may find yourself with an infestation you shouldn't handle alone, including:

Bed bug infestations. Experts report that bed bugs are nearly impossible to kill with insecticides. Instead of filling your home with toxic chemicals, natural pest control professionals use a special heating system to kill bed bugs.

Rodent infestations. Mice carry the lethal Hanta virus. As soon as you see signs of an infestation, such as droppings, call a pest control service so they can safely clean the waste and conduct an inspection. Cleaning rodent waste and nests by yourself without taking the proper safety precautions increases your risk of exposure to the Hanta virus and other diseases rodents carry.

Many pest control service providers provide free inspections, so if you think you might have a pest problem, don't hesitate to give the experts a call.

The History Of Veterans Day Condensed

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, was declared between the Allied nations and Germany in the First World War, then known as "the Great War." Commemorated as Armistice Day beginning the following year, November 11th became a legal federal holiday in the United States in 1938. In the aftermath of World War II and the Korean War, Armistice Day became Veterans Day, a holiday dedicated to American veterans of all wars.

In the United States, an official wreath-laying ceremony is held each Veterans Day at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery, while parades and other celebrations are held in states around the country. Veterans Day is not to be confused with Memorial Day--a common misunderstanding, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Memorial Day (the fourth Monday in May) honors American service members who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle, while Veterans Day pays tribute to all American veterans--living or dead--but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime.

The Final D Day

Written by Marshall Ramsey, a columnist of the Jackson, MS Clarion Ledger newspaper.

"On June 6, 2011, in the corner of an unremarkable nursing home, sat a forgotten man who was desperately trying to forget.

Joseph looked around at the room; it was a cloudy blur. Cataracts were taking his one last good sense from him. He did know the room was full of women. Old, gossipy women, if you asked him. He was the only man in the room and a source of much of their gossip. It was enough to bring a smile to his weathered face. "I would have killed to be in a room full of women when I was 20." He rolled his wheelchair over to the window and looked out at the mountains in the distance. He loved the East Tennessee Smokies. The mountains faded to black as he closed his eyes and drifted off. He had killed when he was 20.

Explosions rocked the airplane. His C-47 Dakota, the military version of the venerable Douglas DC-3 two-engine transport, had caught fire. The Germans apparently did not want company. It was June 6, 1944 — D-Day as General Dwight D. Eisenhower had called it when he spoke to him and his fellow Rangers. They were in the 101st Airborne, the Screaming Eagles, and today was the first day of the end of Adolf Hitler's reign over the continent of Europe. Flak tore through the front of the aircraft, killing a private who had been throwing up just seconds earlier. He looked away from the blood and out the window to see the right engine was flaming. Not a good start to the day. Suddenly an explosion...

The old man woke up. Dorothy Snodgrass had dropped her tray, causing the young orderlies to scurry like ants. To the workers at the nursing home, he was just an old man, a crumbled relic of humanity. He looked out at the mountains again and could see shapes in the clouds. That one reminded him of the Eiffel Tower. Ah, the day he helped liberate Paris. He could smell the sweet smell of perfume in the air. He closed his eyes, took a deep breath and tasted the lipstick of the young French girl who had planted her lips on his.

A young worker tapped him on his shoulder. "Time for your pills, old timer." The man looked at the 24-year-old. The kid knew nothing about sacrifice. About pain. About losing everything and gaining ultimate victory. The kid shoved three pills into his mouth and gave him a drink of water. "Swallow these and I'll go get you some lunch."

Lunch. Mush or whatever the mystery gruel of the day was. Sigh. He remembered his first meal at the German cafe in Berchtesgaden. The taste of the beer. The softness of the bread. The fraulein who served him. Blonde. Busty. He closed his eyes again and his mind drifted off.

More explosions. He floated down into Hell. The C-47 was on fire, lighting up the inky black of the Normandy sky — they had to jump early. Lord only knew where he was about to land. He looked over at his captain. Tracer fire ripped through the captain's body, causing it to burst into a cloud of red vapor. What was left of his body plummeted to the ground. The Germans weren't playing. He was jolted to his senses as his legs hit the ground. More explosions went off around him. ...

A door had slammed. The man lifted his chin so the young man could wipe the food off of it. How embarrassing. How could a warrior like him end up in this place? He rolled over to a dark corner, forgotten, and closed his eyes once again. This time there were no explosions; he just saw his former comrades. They were coming out of the light, surrounded by fog. There was Lefty. There was Sarge. There was Jimbo. All had perished in the Battle of the Bulge. The captain came and grabbed his hand. "Get out of that chair, soldier," he commanded. The man could walk for the first time in years. He walked arm and arm with his buddies into history.

His war was over. His victory had finally come. It was his final D-Day."

Be sure and thank a Veteran, today!!

Irresistible Pecan Pie Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- ½ cup butter, chilled
- 4 tablespoons ice water
- 3 eggs, beaten
- ¾ cup light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons dark corn syrup
- ¾ cup light brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 pinch salt
- ½ cup pecans, finely crushed
- 1 cup pecans, quartered
- 1 cup pecans, halves

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. To Make Crust: In a medium bowl, combine flour, salt and white sugar. Cut butter into flour mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs. Gradually sprinkle the water over the dry mixture, stirring until dough comes together enough to form a ball.
3. On a floured surface flatten dough ball with rolling pin. Roll out into a circle that is one inch larger than pie dish. Place pie shell into dish and refrigerate until pie filling is complete.
4. To Make Pie Filling: In a medium bowl, mix together eggs, light and dark corn syrups, brown sugar, butter, salt and finely crushed pecans. Spread quartered pecans over bottom of refrigerated piecrust. Pour syrup mixture over top of pecans, and then arrange pecan halves on top of pie.
5. Bake in a preheated 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) oven for one hour or until firm; let cool for one hour before serving.

How To Win Friends & Influence People

By Dale Carnegie

Part 4: Be a Leader: How to Change People Without Giving Offense or Arousing Resentment.

Chapter 8: Make The Fault Seem Easy To Correct.

Don't discourage by emphasizing mistakes. Praise the things that are done right and minimize errors.

Tell your child, your spouse, or your employee that he or she is doing it all wrong, and you have destroyed almost every incentive to try to improve. But use the opposite technique – let the other person know that you have faith in his ability to do it, and he will practice until the dawn comes in the window in order to excel.

Principle 8: Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct.

Stay Tuned…

Wise Home Owner Tip:

Smoke Alarms

Dollar for dollar, a smoke alarm is one of the best investments you can make to fireproof your home. They're affordable, typically between $6 and $40 each. And since they're constantly scanning the air in your home or apartment for fire and smoke, they act as a 24/7 "silent sentry."

If you're like most homeowners or renters, your home probably already has at least one smoke alarm. But it's important to remember that different smoke alarms rely on different technologies—and that they're not quite as simple as "set it and forget it."

- Ionization alarms typically respond faster to flaming fires.
- Optical (or photoelectric) alarms may respond more quickly to smoldering fires.
- Although you can install separate ionization and optical smoke alarms, most manufacturers make dual alarms that contain both sensor types.
- Hard-wired alarms can be wired into your home's electrical system, but require hiring an electrician; battery-operated smoke alarms can be low-stress DIY project.
- Smoke alarms are usually mounted high on ceilings or walls at least three feet away from vents, or kitchen/bathroom doors.
- Check manufacturer sites for ideas on how many smoke alarms your dwelling needs. Pay special attention to bedrooms.
- Remember to check the batteries at least every 6 months—make a mental note to check them when you change your clocks (There is a clock changing on November 3rd). Read the smoke alarm's manual for any special requirements.
- Replace smoke detectors once they're 10 years old.

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Did You Know...

That leaving large boxes on your curb could make you a target for burglars? Next time break down your boxes and store them in the recycling or trash bin. This is a good tip to keep in mind with the holidays coming up!

Uplifting Quote of The Month

"Thanksgiving dinners take eighteen hours to prepare. They are consumed in twelve minutes. Halftimes take twelve minutes. This is not coincidence"

~ Erma Bombeck

Joke of The Month

Two hunters are out in the woods when one of them collapses. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes are glazed.

The other man pulls out his cell phone and calls emergency services. He gasps to the operator, "My friend is dead! What can I do?"

The operator in a calm, soothing voice replies, "Take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is a silence, and then a shot is heard.

Back on the phone, the hunter says, "OK, now what?"