

# 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. I WILL TREAT YOUR HOME AS IF IT WERE MY OWN!**



## Weathering The Rain: Tips For Preparing Your Home As Storm Season Intensifies

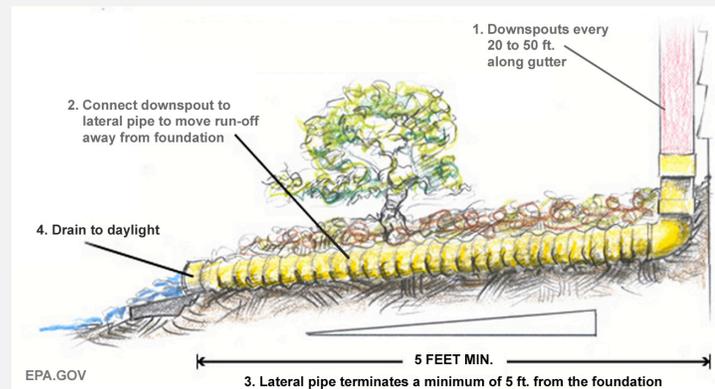
Storm season is here, and it is time to think about protecting your home from storm damage. Unlike with devastating tornadoes, which shred everything in their path, there are steps you can take to keep your family safer and minimize storm damage to your property. Some preparations involve expert help, while others are simple, do-it-yourself projects.

Here are some tips:

**1. Prune your trees.** How do you prune trees for storm preparation? Think of tree canopies as giant sails. Poke holes into a sail; a.k.a. prune your trees, to let wind pass through and vastly reduce wind pressure against your trees. Be careful, however, not to over-prune your trees -- since trees need their leaves for food production. You want your "green giants" to be super-healthy with lots of strength and flexibility. This is usually work for a qualified arborist!

Trees often grow at a slant. Those that overhang driveways and/or lean toward your house should have the limbs trimmed that face your driveway and/or house. In other words, create less weight toward potential trouble zones.

**2. Drainage is perhaps the most overlooked property management tool that every homeowner has.** Spending money on underground, out-of-sight installations, such as drains, is no fun at all. Think of drain lines as the arteries in your body: they are the hidden transport systems that make things flow smoothly. You want a good, well-distributed system with good flow. Just like blockages in your body result in big problems, so do blockages in your drainpipes.



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*Stay tuned for next month's front-page article on getting your home ready for spring!*



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## Upcoming Events In April That Might Interest You...



\* Tax Day is Tuesday, April 15th.



\* Good Friday is on April 18th.

\* Easter Sunday is on April 20th.



\* Earth Day is on Tuesday, April 22nd.



\* The Ann Arbor Farmers Market is in the heart of the historic Kerrytown neighborhood of Ann Arbor. In operation for more than 90 years, the Wednesday and Saturday daytime markets offer an incredible diversity of products, bringing together farmers, plant nurseries, artisans, food carts, and a variety of prepared food vendors.

### Hours

January - April, Saturday | 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

May - December, Wednesday & Saturday | 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

June - October, Wednesday Evening Market | 4 to 8 p.m.

## Weathering The Rain Continued...

Most homeowners clean their gutters on a regular basis. Have you ever cleaned your underground drainage lines? What condition are your drainage lines in? Debris could have gotten into them; roots could have grown into them. Call up a sewer and drain company to inspect (they can send little cameras through the lines) and vac out your drain line – it's a must-do storm preparation.

Walk your property after the next rain. Where does water pond? Is there a pitch on your property? Be sure the grading of your land does not trap water and pitches water away from your house and other structures --including your neighbors' structures -- as well as away from trees. Even minor regrading has big payoffs during big rainstorms.

We all remember seeing many, usually healthy trees being taken down and their roots pulled out of the ground. This does not have to happen. It occurs when water is allowed to pond around tree roots. It turns the soil into a soft sponge, and tree roots no longer have anything to anchor into.

Everyone can dig a ditch. That's what you want to do if you have a designated low spot on your property. Create a dry well. Fill it with crushed stone, top it with filter fabric and, finally, soil. It won't be visible, but you now have a basin for water to collect in rather than the other available tub, otherwise known as your basement!

**3. Recent storms have made clear just how much today's lives depend on electric power, which means a generator is no longer a luxury -- it is essential considering the long power outages of late.** Generators are smart investments -- that's one home improvement that builds value in your home today!

Less expensive, portable generators failed in Hurricane Sandy. They run on gasoline -- lots of gasoline (up to a gallon/hour). Many people could not get to a gas station during the first few days, followed by long hours spent in gas lines from those gas stations that even had gas.

What's a better choice? Permanently installed generators -- although they are expensive and take time to install! Permits and a variety of trades' people have to be pulled together to install them. This takes planning -- and it takes time. Both natural gas and propane-powered generators are available and they're completely automatic. When the main electric source stops the generator starts automatically and shuts off when the main source of electricity comes back on.

One final personal note: While it is wonderful to have a generator during outages to run the house, the constant generator noise wears on you after about two days. I recommend buying the quietest generator on the market! Make it easy on your neighbors, too!

**4. Get your roof ready for the rains.** Inspect your roof twice per year to avoid costly problems that can escalate into tremendous cost.

- Look for cracks along the ridge of your roof and where your shingles fold over to form the cap.
- Inspect the valleys of your roof (the area of your roof with a downward slope). Make sure that the sheet metal or other valley flashing does not have any holes or rusty spots.
- Make sure that you do not have any missing, loose or curled shingles. Replace any in that condition that you find as soon as possible so as to avoid moisture leaks inside your home that can damage your wall and/or ceilings.

**5. Take a look at your gutters to make sure that they drain well and don't cause water to back up.** Also, make sure that there are not a lot of little granules collecting in there. Granules in your gutter are a sign that your roof's shingles are wearing out.

- Make sure that you don't have any down pipe clogs.

**6. Work from the inside out.** Inside your home, check out your ceilings to make sure that you are not experiencing signs of roof or other leakage. Be on the lookout for bubbling areas, water rings, mold or wall or ceiling discoloration. Make any necessary repairs to fix the issue and prevent it from happening again during the upcoming rainy season.

We are likely going to have another powerful storm. The only question is when and will you be prepared! Start today and give yourself peace of mind!

# 10 Spring Cleaning Tips Your Mom Never Told You

By Redbook



**1. Give Stained Clothes a Second Chance:** Before shelling out big bucks on a new wardrobe for spring, do a quick survey of the beautiful clothes you already have. Have a shirt you love but can't wear because of an ink stain? Before cleaning it, soak it in solution with two-parts milk and one-part white vinegar overnight. Stain, be gone.

**2. Clean Your Toilet-With Kool-Aid:** It may be better known as one of America's favorite juice mixers, but Kool-Aid can be used in another very important way: as toilet bowl cleaner. "Kool-Aid is natural and non-toxic. It's full of citric-acid that will clean the toilet," cleaning guru Maxwell Gillingham-Ryan says. The cherry flavor is his favorite. Before you go to bed, flush your toilet and pour in a packet of Kool-Aid. Let it sit overnight and flush in morning. Don't worry about stains; because it's being used on a porcelain surface, the color won't bleed. A can of Coca Cola or Pepsi can also do the job, according to Todd Saunders, president of the Cleaning Specialists of America. Who knew!?

**3. Have an Arsenal in Each Room:** Don't waste time trying to find your cleaning supplies. "If you have multiple bathrooms, I recommend putting products in buckets in each bathroom," cleaning specialist Laura Wittmann says. "It saves you the time running around from the kitchen.

**4. Swap Paper Towels for Newspapers:** Paper towels are not always the most effective for wiping surfaces, especially glass. "There's oil on glass, and that's where the streaking comes from, Gillingham-Ryan explains. While paper towels simply smear the oil, newspapers can penetrate it, making the glass shinier. For cleaning windows, Gillingham-Ryan suggests, "Use dry bundles of newspaper and solution with alcohol to cut the grease. It scrapes the window, removing the grease, and then it wipes the window once it's reached the surface."

For a stronger window cleaning solution, try mixing 1/2 cup of ammonia, 1/2 cup of alcohol and a couple teaspoons of Down in a gallon of lukewarm water. Anthony Barnes from Glo-Pro Cleaners says that mix is more effective than Windex, which may not be compatible with the kind of window you have.

**5. These Colors Won't Run:** The most dreaded part of doing laundry is definitely the tedious task of gathering and sorting--once the clothes are actually in the machine, it's smooth sailing. Wittmann says it doesn't have to be that way: "I don't sort my laundry. I wash each child's laundry separately with vinegar to keep the colors from running. I don't even need to use fabric softener."

Acid in distilled white vinegar is strong enough break down detergent's alkalies, making it more effective in cleaning your clothes--yet still mild enough to preserve and soften fabrics. The acid also makes your clothes smell fresher because it cuts through perspiration and residual deodorant. Don't worry about the vinegar's odor--it goes away as the clothes dry.

Make sure you have individual baskets for each person in the house. When it's time to wash, add a half a cup to a cup (depending on the size of the load) of white vinegar with laundry detergent when filling up the washing machine. Be sure to separate red items and new denim for the first wash.

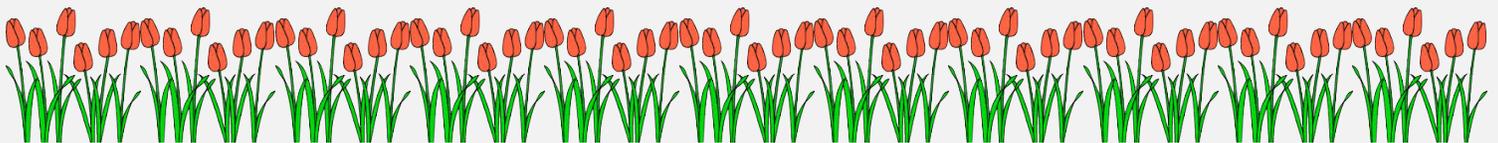
**6. Run on Empty:** If you find spots on your glassware, it's time to run an empty cycle. Gillingham-Ryan suggests clearing the dishwasher and running a cycle with a package of citric acid crystals you can find at the drugstore or supermarket in the canning or spice aisle. Then, run another cycle with regular detergent. Make sure to rinse and soak stained dishes in Clorox and water before putting them in the dishwasher. This will stop stains from spreading to other plates and flatware.

**7. Improve Your Flow:** After you've cleaned the air vents in your house, wax them with car wax. "This way the dust won't build up as quickly, and the air will pass through better," Gillingham-Ryan says.

**8. Keep it Dry:** Most people would think to wipe their walls with a wet rag, but Gillingham-Ryan suggests otherwise. "[Use] a dry microfiber towel on a wall and stay dry on the wall in general. Then on smaller, more detailed surfaces like knobs and molding, use surface cleaner with the microfiber towels." Gillingham-Ryan suggests using Magic Erasers from Mr. Clean on tough stains.

**9. Fight Stains With Toothpaste:** Did your little one get crayon stains on the wall again? Saunders suggests dabbing some toothpaste onto a damp napkin to wipe it out. "But don't lather it on," he warns, "or it'll get pasty." Saunders also says you can use the same technique to clean scuffs off your shoes, the bottom of an iron, or on chrome surfaces in the bathroom to make them shine.

**10. Rub Away Pet Hair:** No one likes a couch coated in pet hair, but who wants to pick it up strand by strand? Luckily, Saunders says you can get it off by using a dishwashing glove. "Wear any latex or dishwashing glove and rub it rapidly [on the upholstery]. It builds up an electrical charge and the hair will stick to it." When you're done, just take the glove off and throw it in the trash.



## Classic Deviled Eggs Recipe

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 dozen large eggs
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 teaspoons yellow mustard
- 3 dashes of Worcestershire sauce
- Salt
- Sweet paprika or pure ancho chile powder, for garnish

### **Directions:**

1. In a medium saucepan, cover the eggs with cold water and bring to a rolling boil. Cover, remove from the heat and let stand for 12 minutes.
2. Immediately drain the eggs and gently shake the pan to lightly crack the shells. Fill the pan with cold water and shake lightly to loosen the eggshells. Let stand until the eggs are cool.
3. Drain and peel the eggs; pat dry. Cut the eggs in half lengthwise. Carefully transfer the yolks to a mini processor. Add the mayonnaise, Dijon and yellow mustards and Worcestershire sauce and pulse until smooth and creamy; season with salt.
4. Using a pastry bag fitted with a star tip or a teaspoon, fill the egg whites with the yolk mixture. Arrange the eggs on a platter, garnish with paprika and serve.

## THE PLATINUM RULE

By Dr. Tony Alessandra

We have all heard of the Golden Rule-and many people aspire to live by it. The Golden Rule is not a panacea. Think about it: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The Golden Rule implies the basic assumption that other people would like to be treated the way that you would like to be treated.

### **The alternative to the Golden Rule is the Platinum Rule:**

"Treat others the way they want to be treated." Ah hah! What a difference. The Platinum Rule accommodates the feelings of others. The focus of relationships shifts from "this is what I want, so I'll give everyone the same thing" to "let me first understand what they want and then I'll give it to them."

### **A Modern Model For Chemistry**

The goal of The Platinum Rule is personal chemistry and productive relationships. You do not have to change your personality. You do not have to roll over and submit to others. You simply have to understand what drives people and recognize your options for dealing with them.

### **The Platinum Rule divides behavioral preferences into four basic styles:**

- Director
- Socializer
- Relater
- Thinker

Everyone possesses the qualities of each style to various degrees and everyone has a dominant style. For the sake of simplicity, this article will focus only on dominant styles.

Stay tuned for more next month...

**"Do Unto Others as They  
Want Done Unto Them."**

## Uplifting Quote of The Month

*"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."*

*~ Native American Proverb*



## *Wise Home Owner Tip:* **How to help PREVENT cooking fires**

**DO** stay in the kitchen when cooking on your range. Many cooking fires are the result of absentee cooks.

**DO** turn pan handles away from the cooktop edge. A bumped handle can cause spills that can result in painful burns.

**DO** supervise children when they work in the kitchen. **DO** stress safety when teaching children to cook.

**DO** wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. **DO** keep your apron securely tied.

**DO** keep cooktop surfaces clean. Grease buildups can catch fire.

**DO** keep flammable fabrics away from elements or burners. **DO** provide cool, well-ventilated storage for cleaning fluids and solvents. **DON'T** keep gasoline in the house.

**DO** have a smoke detector in your home. **DO** check it monthly to make sure it is working; replace batteries when necessary.

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## **Did You Know...**

That paper towels are not always the most effective for wiping surfaces, especially glass? There's oil on glass, and that's where the streaking comes from. While paper towels simply smear the oil, newspapers can penetrate it, making the glass shinier. For cleaning windows, use dry bundles of newspaper and solution with alcohol to cut the grease.

## Joke Of The Month

