

Spring To-Do's - Prepping for Spring

Ah yes, the clocks have sprung forward, spring bulbs are blooming, the days are getting longer and warmer ... Spring is here and summer is just around the corner.



Carol M. Highsmith

Spring is traditionally the time of year that one's house is aired out and given a thorough cleaning. If you are a Prepper or homesteader, there are additional chores to address.

*"No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn."
Hal Borland*

Preparedness:



- ✓ Check all go-bags; Be sure your basics are there and rotate any items that need to be rotated. Check the bag itself for wear and tear, repair or replace as needed.

- ✓ Check all first aid kits. Rotate or toss supplies as needed.



- ✓ Check your Important Document Book and be sure all the information is current. Update as needed.

- ✓ Change batteries in flashlights, smoke detectors and CO2 alarms and NOAA emergency radios.



- ✓ Check Fire extinguishers, recharge or replace as needed.

Note: I usually do the, smoke and CO2 batteries, as well as fire extinguishers when the clocks change and leave the other chores for actual spring or fall ;-}

- ✓ Take an inventory of your disaster supplies and pantry. Budget to replace items as needed.



- ✓ Inspect and repair any perimeter alarms and or booby traps.

*"Behold, my friends, the spring is come;
the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun,
and we shall soon see the results of their love!"*

Sitting Bull



Inside the House:



- ✓ Go through your pantry. Toss and replace expired items. This is your time to reorganize these food items. Remember to keep the oldest within easiest reach. (first in-first out)

- ✓ Go through your medicine cabinets: Be sure you have viable 'summer' items like sunscreen, insect bite/sting salve, Aloe Vera to treat burns and the like. Remember to keep the oldest within easiest reach. (first in-first out)



- ✓ Take advantage of the warmer weather and air out the house. Open at least one window in each room for an hour or two.

- ✓ Move furniture and vacuum beneath and behind it.

- ✓ Take throw and area rugs outside to air out.

- ✓ Wash bedspreads and quilts, then line dry for that spring fresh smell. Rotate/flip mattresses. Use this time to inspect your mattress pads, pillow covers and all bedding for needed replacement or repairs. Don't forget the dust ruffle. If you can afford it, have the mattresses professionally cleaned.

- ✓ Have children inspect and toss or give away toys that they no longer play with or are broken.

- ✓ Clean and polish your dining room hutch. Remove all the dishes, etc and clean them too.



- ✓ If weather in your area has stabilized, go through closets and drawers to remove winter coats, jackets and clothing. Wash, roll instead of fold and store in vacuum sealed Space Bags that are stored in some sort of container marked 'Winter Clothing'. Give away what no longer fits or have a garage sale.



- ✓ Clean the refrigerator and defrost or clean the freezer. This is your time to reorganize these food items. Inspect hoses and cords. Vacuum the coils on your refrigerator. Remember to keep the oldest within easiest reach. (first in-first out) Pull the frig or freezer out and vacuum behind it. You might find some 'lost' items.



- ✓ For other appliances: Inspect hoses and cords on your appliances. Cleaning the vent and exhaust areas of your dryer seasonally will prevent a fire. Clean lint and debris from around your dryer as well and be sure to examine hoses for signs of damage. Run your dishwasher empty using vinegar and clean the trap out if your dishwasher has one. To clear residue from a coffee pot, run white vinegar through it and then just plain water. A close washer of white vinegar or baking soda also removes any old stuffy smells from the washers tub and hoses.

- ✓ Replace furnace and hydrator/dehydrator filters. If your area is warm enough, winterize your furnace. Replace filters. Clean vents and make sure that no furniture or other debris are blocking vents. A professional inspection and maintenance can be a great way to keep your heating units in working order if you can afford it.

- ✓ Dust and clean all art and photographs along the wall. Use a microfiber cloth to dust down art and photographs. Occasionally these items may need to actually be washed. Wipe down with a slightly damp rag, being careful not to let any liquid seep behind the frame and damage the photo.
- ✓ Clean your stove and oven. Be though and take the knobs, burners, burner covers, and spill catchers off of the stove.
- ✓ Drain sediment from hot water heaters.
- ✓ Clean shower heads
- ✓ If you have slip covers now is the time to have them cleaned.
- ✓ Remove vents and clean with vinegar or diluted bleach. Tie a sachet of baking soda to the vent; as air travels through it, this will 'freshen' the scent. You can reduce some dust by placing a panel of cheese cloth to the back side of the vent and then screw it back in place. Do this twice a year. Works great. If you can afford to have your duct work professionally cleaned – do so.
- ✓ Purge magazines or books. Toss them or take them to an office waiting area. Some schools may use magazines for children's projects.
- ✓ Inspect and clean ceiling fans. Reverse the fan direction for the warmer weather.
- ✓ Clean the light fixtures
- ✓ Take the time to clean the doormats inside and outside your doorways.

*"April prepares her green traffic light and
the world thinks Go."*

Christopher Morley, John Mistletoe



Around the House



- ✓ Clean your windows inside and out. Vacuum any dust on sills inside and wash outside. Check for any new cracks and the like and repair them now. Wash the window dressings according to the manufacturer's directions or send dirtier drapes to the cleaners. Take down and rinse off screens, before replacing.

- ✓ If you have a septic system, spring and fall are good times to flush some RidX down the commode. Some areas also require annual inspections.
- ✓ Inspect your well or have it professionally maintained. If you utilize a cistern with your well, now is the time to clean it or have it professionally cleaned.
- ✓ Inspect your attic and crawl space, inside and out. Look for holes and weak spots and close them. Check for rodent droppings and take appropriate action. Believe me, you don't want some critter setting up house in these places and it is far easier to keep them out than it is to get rid of them once they have entered.

"Springtime is the land awakening.

The March winds are the morning yawn."

Quoted by Lewis Grizzard in Kathy Sue Loudermilk, I Love You

Outside the house

- ✓ Clean and inspect your evaporative cooler or AC so it is ready to go as it gets hotter. Replace filters. Clean vents and make sure that no furniture or other debris are blocking vents. If need be have a professional inspection and maintenance done.
- ✓ If you have a wood pile you won't be using during the summer – rotate the wood. Put what is currently on top, on the bottom and visa versa. Be sure it is protected from the elements during the summer.
- ✓ Clean and 'summarize' your winter yard tools. Remember to follow manufacturer care instructions for snow blowers and the like. Most like to see you drain oil and fuel for summer storage.
- ✓ Inspect, sharpen and clean, then repair or replace your summer yard tools. Tune up hedge trimmers and lawn mowers, have the blades sharpened. Get your fertilizer spreader cleaned and ready to go.
- ✓ Inspect and clean, then repair or replace summer patio furniture.
- ✓ Inspect and clean, then repair or replace your grill.

- ✓ Inspect and clean your gutters from all of winter's debris.
- ✓ Clear any debris from your yard. Clear away any remaining dead foliage and weeds from beds and lawn. New growth will be protected from damage or disease.
- ✓ Wipe down the outside of your exterior doors seasonally to remove month's worth of dirt. This periodic cleaning will keep your entrances looking fresh and clean, and prevent permanent staining on your doors.
- ✓ Begin major spring landscaping projects. Spring's the time to put in shrubs and trees, but check with your local extension office for specific planting recommendations for your area.

- ✓ Inspect the roof for winter damage: leaks, missing or broken shingles or tiles. Arrange for any needed repairs early; roofing contractors can be hard to find during summer's construction season.



- ✓ Use a sunny Saturday to scrape, prime and paint peeling spots on trim or woodwork. You'll protect wood against summer's heat and moisture--and prevent a more difficult paint job come fall.

- ✓ Inspect and repair any walkways or driveways and the like. Snow and cold can wreak havoc on your walkways and driveways. With warmer weather approaching, take this time to patch cracks and replace loose bricks and pavers. Rent a power washer or purchase a chemical treatment to clean up embedded stains in concrete, stone or asphalt.
- ✓ Inspect power tools for frayed cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housing and repair or replace damaged items. Store power tools indoors. Unplug outdoor tools when not in use. Do not carry power tools by the cord.



- ✓ Check for fence and exterior repairs.

- ✓ Clean and replace outdoor lights and bulbs.



- ✓ Clean container ponds and pools to get them ready for summer. Inspect pumps, hoses and filters.
- ✓ Prune dead branches, trim back overgrown shrubbery and remove any obstructive plantings. Spread mulch or bark around trees, shrubs and flowers for a weed-free, well-kept look.
- ✓ Strategically placed plants can conceal unattractive aspects of your house or yard.
- ✓ You may find bittercress, chickweed and other winter growing weeds in the beds. Pull them now, before they go to seed.
- ✓ Plant trees and shrubs, but be cautious about digging in clay soil until it dries out a bit.
- ✓ Check house plants for insect infestations that can build up during the winter.
- ✓ Planting can begin in early March, if the soil is not too wet to prepare a seed bed.
- ✓ In the middle of the month you can direct
- ✓ Lawns may need thatching, fertilizing or pest prevention.
- ✓ Place large pots or hanging baskets around the stoop or porch. Bushes or hedges can hide air-conditioning units or propane tanks, and flower beds and window boxes will stylize a stark facade.
- ✓ This is a good time to treat hemlock trees for Hemlock Woolly Adelgids.
- ✓ House plants that have gotten leggy can be cut back. Cut above a leaf node far down on the stem so the plant can regain a bushier form.
- ✓ Insecticidal soap can be useful for controlling aphids, spider mites or whiteflies. There are many recipes online for homemade insecticidal soap with safe ingredients.
- ✓ It is time to make repairs to damaged trees and shrubs.
- ✓ Plant green peas, kale, spinach, turnips, carrots and onions.
- ✓ Transplant broccoli, cauliflower and

seed lettuce and plant potatoes.

cabbage late in the month.

- ✓ Late March is a good time to start transplants for tomatoes, peppers and eggplants. It takes about 6 week to have plants ready to set out in early May.
- ✓ This is still a fine time to plant all fruit crops.
- ✓ If you covered the strawberry bed with straw, plan to remove it late in the month when plants begin to flower.

- ✓ Start an asparagus bed.
- ✓ Prune fruit trees, blueberries and grapes. The Buncombe County Extension office has videos available for loan on pruning grapes, blueberries and fruit trees.
- ✓ If you covered the strawberry bed with straw, plan to remove it late in the month when plants begin to flower.

For more details on your vegetable garden see: *Spring is Just Around the Corner-Prepping Your Vegetable Garden* @ http://weebly-file/2/2/5/0/22509786/spring_is_just_around_the_corner_-_prepping_your_vegetable_garden_new_site.pdf

"The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful."

E.E. Cummings



Farm, Ranch or Homestead

Depending on if you live on a farm, ranch or family homestead will determine what chores you need to do for your general operation. However, here are some basics to think about and get you started.



- ✓ Some livestock may need inoculations and inspections or to be moved to another pasture.



- ✓ Spring is usually calving season, so you dry calves soon after birth, tag or vaccinate if required.



- ✓ I'm not too familiar with sheep, but I do know that they tend to birth in spring too. So I would imagine that some kind of 'nursery' type paddock and or housing will be needed as well as any inoculations, tagging and the like.



- ✓ If you have rabbits or chickens, spring and fall are the perfect time clean out their 'houses'. This is also the time to get new chicks or if you are self-sustaining you can end up with too many eggs to let them all hatch so you need to preserve the extras or toss them.



- ✓ Goats are often de-horned or budded in spring.



- ✓ Any livestock (big or small) will need the usual daily feeding and caretaking. Most will need feeding every day until the pasture grass is green enough for grazing.



- ✓ Tilling under winter crops or ground cover; fertilizing and soil amendments may be called at different times for different crops and most large farm fields requiring leveling the ground and seeding.



- ✓ Once snow is no longer an issue, spring repairs and any new building begins. Of course there is always the never-ending duty of checking the fences to ensure there are no holes through which livestock could escape -- or predators could enter.



- ✓ Now that the worst of winter is over, cattle guards, farm/ranch roads and driveways will need leveling and or grading too.



- ✓ Another chore is to clean, inspect and repair any irrigation ditches and equipment, as well as all the livestock watering devices and tanks.



➤ This is on top of all the normal day to day tasks of living off the land.



Keep On Preppin' ;-}

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