

"Helpful Hints & Shortcuts for Life at Home"851 West Fulton Street
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Phone: 616-451-0787
www.guaranteesystem.com**Cleaning Corner***Cool Uses for Coca-Cola*

- Pour a can of Coca-Cola into the toilet bowl. Let the "real thing" sit for one hour, then flush clean
- The citric acid in Coke removes stains from vitreous china
- To remove rust spots from chrome car bumpers, rub the bumper with a crumpled-up piece of Reynolds Wrap aluminum foil dipped in Coca Cola.
- To clean corrosion from car battery terminals, pour a can of Coca-Cola over the terminals to bubble away the corrosion
- To loosen a rusted bolt, apply a cloth soaked in Coca-Cola to the rusted bolt for several minutes
- To remove grease from clothes, empty a can of Coke into a load of greasy clothes, add detergent and run through a regular cycle. The Coca-Cola will help loosen grease stains.
- Coca-Cola will also clean road haze from your windshield.

April

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| 1429 | Joan of Arc leads France to victory over England |
| 1766 | Patent awarded for 1 st fire escape; design consists of wicker basket on pulley/chain |
| 1813 | A patent is issued for the manufacture of rubber |
| 1887 | Susannah M. Salter, first US woman mayor, elected to serve Argonia, Kansas |
| 1893 | The ice cream soda is declared our national drink by Congress |
| 1902 | Cecil Rhodes established Rhodes Scholarship fund with a \$10 million bequest |
| 1953 | TV Guide magazine published its first issue |
| 1970 | Paul McCartney announces he is leaving the Beatles |
| 1986 | Bobby Ewing is brought back from the dead in the famous "Dallas" shower scene |
| 1995 | Kitchener, Ontario butchers make the world's longest sausage (28.77 miles long) |

Flora & Fauna*Gardening Tasks for April*

At long last, spring has arrived! As you look out upon your garden, does the nagging question of "where do I even begin" sound familiar? There is so much to do in every corner of the yard this month that it is difficult to know where to start.

Here are a few garden projects that you can do to help keep your garden looking its best. As you begin your quest for the perfect garden, don't overdo it! It's probably been a while since you gave your muscles a good workout, so start out slowly to avoid backache.

Shrubs and trees

- There still is time to plant trees and shrubs. However, by mid month it will be a little late to transplant large trees or shrubs, so do them now.
- April is ideal for pruning evergreens such as a Juniper, Cypress or conifer. Remove all dead, diseased, and undesirable wood. However, do not prune back into the bare wood part of the plant.
- Broadleaf and needle leaf evergreens benefit most from lightly spreading a high nitrogen fertilizer around their bases.

Perennials, annuals, and bulbs

- April is the month for planting summer flowering bulbs like dahlias, gladiolas and lilies. Mix bulb fertilizer, processed manure and peat moss into the planting soil.
- Plant annual seeds of asters, cosmos, marigolds, zinnias in the garden.
- Plant new rosebushes before growth starts and buds swell.

Fruits and veggies

- Control weeds and aerate the soil by cultivating between the rows of plants.
- April is a great time to select and plant fruit trees and berry plants. Fruits and berries do best when planted in full sun.
- Plant perennial vegetables like asparagus, rhubarb, horseradish, etc. It's also time to plant peas, carrots, beets, spinach, cauliflower, cabbage, etc. Root crops like potatoes, radishes, parsnips and onions can be planted at anytime. Late this month you can plant beans and corn.
- When danger of frost has passed, uncover strawberry beds and keep them well watered.

The lawn

- A spring type of lawn fertilizer should perk up the lawn and improve its overall color and appearance. If there is moss growing in the lawn, use spring lawn fertilizer with a moss-killer included.
- Spring is also a good time to thatch and over-seed the lawn. Thatch buildup can smother your lawn and provide an environment for diseases. Remove thatch with a brisk raking, or with a dethatching machine. Over seeding will help fill-in the lawn and deter the re-growth of moss and weeds.
- Aerating the lawn will allow water to penetrate deeper into the lawn soil so you won't need to water during dryer months ahead.

House Plants

- Rotate your houseplants so that each side receives its share of light, for even growth and a balanced shape.
- As the sun's rays strengthen, some plants, such as African Violets, may need to be moved away from a south-facing window to avoid leaf scorch.
- Spring cleaning your plants will keep them beautiful and help to avoid diseases. Remove any spent flowers, dead leaves or branches, or any yellowing leaves. Rinse the dust from the leaves with the kitchen sprayer. Clean leaves allow the plant to breathe!

Money Saving Coupon**10% off Spring Cleaning****If you can't use this coupon, give it to a friend!****As always, you have my Personal Satisfaction Guarantee. If it's not cleaned to your standards, we'll clean it again for FREE.**

This coupon expires April 30, 2008

Guarantee System

This issue of Neighborhood News brought to you by:

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Inside this issue you'll find:

- Gardening Tasks for April
- Cool Uses for Coca-Cola
- Health Tips: How Are You Sleeping?
- Kid Corner: Hiring a Babysitter
- April Fool's "Beverages"
- Feng Shui for the Office
- Other Uses for Bounce
- March Money-Saving Special

Health Tips: How Are You Sleeping?

Sleep is more than a timeout from daily life or a passive retreat. You likely spend about one-third of your life in the state of unconsciousness known as sleep. A good night's sleep leaves you feeling refreshed, alert and ready to tackle the day's tasks. But what exactly is going on while you're catching some ZZZs?

While sleeping, you move through six stages:

1. **Awake.** It's normal to be awake for short periods during the night. Expect 3-10 brief arousals, though you probably won't remember each one. It's likely part of your body's defense mechanisms to keep you aware of what's going on around you.
2. **Stage one.** During stage one, you sleep lightly and drift in and out of sleep. During this stage you're easily wakened. Your muscles begin to slow down and your eyes move very slowly.
3. **Stage two.** In stage two, your muscles relax. Your brain waves slow down, though occasionally you have bursts of brain activity. You spend about half of your sleep in this stage.
4. **Stages three and four.** Deep sleep sets in. Your brain waves become large and slow. Your breathing becomes rhythmic, and your muscles remain relaxed. At this point your body begins releasing reparative hormones. Stages one through four are referred to as non-rapid eye movement (NREM).
5. **Rapid eye movement (REM).** During REM sleep your muscles stop moving completely. Your breathing and heart rate become rapid and irregular, your blood pressure is more variable, and your eyes move rapidly in bursts of activity. Your brain waves show a pattern similar to wakefulness. Scientists believe this indicates that your brain is using this time to sort and organize your memories. Dreaming takes place during this stage. If you're awakened during REM sleep, you may recall vivid dreams.
6. Throughout the night, you continuously move from one stage to another in cycles that can last from 70 to 90 minutes each. Early REM periods are very short, however, usually 5 to 10 minutes long.

What happens when you don't get enough sleep?

When you don't get enough sleep, you may feel less alert and less vigorous and, perhaps, more confused, irritable and fatigued. Lack of sleep affects not only your energy level but also your mental and social functioning. You may find it more difficult to concentrate. You may find that you lose patience quickly, that you become less interactive in your relationships and that you become less productive at work.

Chronically losing sleep results in sleep debt, which can lead to serious consequences. Sleep debt is cumulative, and even small nightly sleep losses can add up to affect your daytime function. Possible consequences include increased accidents and poor performance on the job or in school.

Long-term sleep deprivation can affect your physical and mental health. Sleep helps bolster your immune system so that you can fight off viruses and bacteria. After a few nights of absolutely no sleep, some people begin hallucinating.

Don't be embarrassed about your need for sleep

In today's busy world you may find that others tease you or make light of your need for sleep. But in reality, sleep is just as important as the activities you perform during your waking hours. If you routinely have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, talk to your doctor.

Kid Corner: Hiring a Babysitter

Finding a babysitter can be a challenge for many parents, and being comfortable with and confident that the one you've selected will keep your kids safe and happy can be somewhat unnerving. The best place to start looking for a babysitter is within the community you know: your church, local schools, your workplace. When you contact families a sitter has worked for, ask how many kids they have. Also, find out if they ever had any problems with the way the sitter interacted with their kids. You can also check out www.sittercity.com or www.sittercafe.com for a listing of local sitters in your area. These sites will charge you a membership fee, but also allow you to conduct background checks on babysitter candidates.

Top Questions to Ask a Prospective Babysitter

1. **Why do you enjoy working with children?**
2. **Have you received any specialized training for child care?**
(Such as first aid/CPR, attended a babysitter course, or taken related school courses)
3. **Do you have any health restrictions that could affect your ability to babysit?**
(Yes, it really is okay to ask this question! For example, if you have three cats and the candidate is terribly allergic to cats, then this could be a problem. Or if you have bedrooms on the second floor and the candidate cannot climb stairs.)
4. **Is there an adult or family member nearby in the event of an emergency whom you could contact?**
(This question is relevant if you are considering using a teenager or person who does not drive.)
5. **What activities will you plan with my kid(s) when I am gone?**
(Ask this question to determine whether the potential babysitter plans any games, crafts or child-friendly activities in your absence.)
6. **Under what type of situation would you call me?**
(Ask this to determine how a potential babysitter would rank a "need" or emergency.)
7. **What is your hourly rate of pay?**
8. **What babysitter qualities do you have that should make me want to hire you?**
(A good babysitter may talk about kid activities or art projects already planned, fun and games, a strong sense of humor, etc.)
9. **What was your worst babysitting experience, and why?**
(See how the candidate worked through the problem.)
10. **How would you handle the situation if my child displayed bad behaviors such as tantrums, biting or not obeying you?**

Most Importantly – Ask for References!

Even though you've asked all the right questions of the potential babysitter and are satisfied with the responses, don't overlook the critical last step: checking references. When interviewing a potential childcare provider, whether it is a teenage babysitter, daycare teacher or nanny, be sure to communicate that you intend to conduct a reference check and highly value findings. Ask for contact information on former employers or for other families whose children a teen has babysat previously. This also helps to "bring out" any concerns up front.

Homestyle Recipes Just for You

April Fool's Treats

These treats are the perfect April Fool's joke. Everyone will laugh and enjoy a sweet dessert!

April Fool's Tea or Juice

Ingredients:

A package of dessert gelatin

1. Dissolve a package of dessert gelatin according to the directions on the box (orange to look like iced tea; raspberry, strawberry or lemon to resemble fruit punch).
2. Pour the liquid gelatin into drinking glasses, then place a plastic straw in each. Set the glasses on a tray in the refrigerator until the gelatin firms up.

Fried Egg Sundae

Ingredients:

Vanilla ice cream

Marshmallow fluff

Lemon pudding/pie filling (an instant mix works fine)

1. Scoop ice cream into a cup, then spoon on a generous blob of marshmallow fluff (it will smooth out and resemble an egg white as the air escapes).
2. For a yolk, add a rounded blob of lemon pudding. Makes one sundae.

April Fool's Day History

In sixteenth-century France, the start of the new year was observed on April 1st. It was celebrated much in the same way as it is today with parties and dancing into the late hours of the night. Then in 1562, Pope Gregory introduced a new calendar for the Christian world, and the new year fell on January 1st. There were some people, however, who hadn't heard or didn't believe the change in the date, so they continued to celebrate New Year's Day on April 1st. Others played tricks on them and called them...

"April fools."

Get the Most out of Decorating Photos

Decorating magazines offer a terrific source for decorating ideas. However, it can be overwhelming to see hundreds of "perfect" rooms and photographs in each issue. So instead of feeling inundated with ideas and projects, try some of these techniques for looking at magazine photographs.

1. Rather than just browsing a magazine, this is **looking with a purpose**. It's not just paging through a publication, it's **sitting down with an assignment**. By consciously deciding what you want to learn, you can **focus** on a particular topic and teach yourself more about design.

2. Choose one photo of an interesting room and quickly **write down all of the descriptive words** you can think of to describe the room -- *open, white woodwork, casual style, horizontal lines, dark fabrics, textured brick, green plants, collections, comfy, fireplace, paneled wall detail*, and so forth. **Write down as many as you can in 1 minute**. This exercise will help you look deeper into photographs, showing you the elements of each room.

3. Study a photograph and, if you can, glue or tape it to a piece of plain white paper. Decide on the **primary, secondary and accent colors**. Write them down. Then look on a color wheel to determine the type of color scheme (monochromatic, complimentary, etc.). Look through your collection of paint chips, finding the colors that match and gluing them to the paper as well. This exercise will help you focus on color and become more adept at matching color.

4. Take notice of **art and accessories** in photographs. Watch for arranging tips, grouping ideas, height, spacing and placement. Behind a sofa, how have the pictures been arranged? Does the arrangement extend to the outer edges of the sofa? How high have pictures been hung? Look for the overall shapes of groups of objects. For example, a lamp, plant, and dish placed on a table may form a large triangle. Also look at how the designer has used objects of different sizes in arrangements. Use this exercise to see the bigger picture as well as the details in art and accessories.

5. Use magazines to search for examples of **scale and balance**. If your home has a huge 18-foot ceiling in the living room, look through magazines for rooms with similar dimensions. What scale furniture did the designer use in the room? How do the scale of the furnishings work together? What size lamps, tables, rugs, and draperies were used? How is the room balanced? If a massive fireplace dominates one wall, what has been placed on an opposing wall for balance?

6. **Pattern mixing** is another room element that is interesting to study in many photographs. How many fabric patterns can you count in a room? Which pattern is **dominant**, which is **secondary**, and which are accents? What qualities are present in each pattern (color, style, background)? How are the patterns distributed around the room? Tape the photograph onto white paper and make a list of each pattern you see. Now, make a list of the furniture and every pattern used in the room, noting the attributes of each (plain color, narrow stripe, large floral, mini check, etc.)

... Carpet Talk...

Not many of us do it, but carpet care service techs would love to be consulted before a customer purchases the carpet they'll wind up having to clean, repair and restore. Select the right carpet type and technicians will breeze through your house at regular intervals, saving you time and money.

Researching your best options just got easier, thanks to Angie's List, a website devoted to helping consumers make wise decisions about topics like carpet selection. Angie's List members should know about such things: they spend nearly \$6 million on carpet sales, installation and repair annually and approached their purchases with the following questions:

- *Where will my carpet be installed?* Wise padding and material choices should hang on how heavy the traffic is in the room being upgraded.
- *Will I be in this home for a long or short time?* Picking a bright color could limit the number of offers you get when you put it on the market, so go with neutrals if a sale is in your future.
- *How much should I spend?* Again, this depends on whether you plan to stick around or are looking to perk up the house for the resale market. Be certain prices you collect include product *and* installation so no surprises await you when the job is done.
- *Who will do the measuring?* Do-it-yourselfers confident in their ability to get it right could be shooting themselves in the foot by insisting on doing their own measuring. Installers don't charge extra to do the math, so save everyone headaches by staying out of the measuring process.
- *Do I understand all of my options?* Knowing the difference between nylon, olefin, polyester, acrylic, wool and blends can ensure a long and happy relationship between you and your carpet. So, if you don't get answers from your salesman, call your carpet cleaner. He or she is trained to know all about carpet fiber, weave and upkeep. You'll be glad you did!