

Flora & Fauna

Caring for Your Garden Tools

It's just about time to put away the shears and shovels you used in the garden all spring and summer. But before you chuck that dirt-encrusted shovel in a dusty corner of the garage, take some time to give it a proper cleaning. Maintaining your garden tools on a regular basis assures that they will be ready to go to work on your next garden chore. Following a few basic rules will add many years of life and use to all of the tools which make your gardening tasks easier.

Basic Tool Maintenance Tips:

- Always remove all of the soil from your digging tools after each use. Usually a quick spray with the garden hose is all it takes. Scrape off stubborn, dried-on mud with a screwdriver.
- Thoroughly clean any tools that have been used for chemical applications. Fertilizers and other chemicals will rapidly corrode any metal parts.
- Never put your tools away wet. Allow them to dry completely before storing to prevent rusting and handle rot.

Caring for Wooden Handles

- Check for cracks and splinters. Sand and roughness down with a fine 100 grit sandpaper.
- Once each garden season, rub boiled linseed oil into your wooden handles to help preserve them.
- Paint the handles a bright color. It will help preserve the wood, make it easier for you to find your tools, and add some decorative flair!

Caring for Metal

- After each use, wipe the metal parts of pruners, shears, and loppers with an oily rag. Alternately, you can wipe your tools dry with a clean rag, and then spray lightly with a penetrating oil such as WD40®.
- Sharpen your cutting tools as well as the blades of shovels and spades during the gardening season. A hone or whetstone should be used for sharpening cutting tools. A file should be used to remove nicks and smooth the edge of your shovels and trowels.
- If the sharpening sounds like more than you're willing to tackle, give your local lawn and garden center a call. Most will sharpen your tools for you for a nominal fee.

Good idea – To prolong the life of your digging tools:

1. Fill a five-gallon bucket with sand.
2. Mix in one quart of motor oil. (You can use the oil that you've drained after an oil change.)
3. After using your shovel or fork, stick the blade or tines into the sand a couple of times to remove dirt and oil the tool at the same time.

GUARANTEE SYSTEM.

1518 Steele Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Phone: 616-451-0787
www.guaranteesystem.com

Cleaning Corner: *Cleaning Glassware*

Cleaning glassware, whether a simple juice glass or delicate wine glass, can really be a headache – especially when you can't get rid of stubborn spots or worse, the glass breaks. Here are a few helpful tips to make this chore easier:

- Use the bartender's method for speedy stemware washing. Holding the base, pump the glass vigorously in very hot sudsy water, then quickly put it in hot clear water (cooler water may shatter it). Dry upside down on a cotton towel.
- For extra-shiny, streakless glasses, add a little vinegar or borax to the final rinse water.
- If glasses have hard-water stains, rub them with a scouring pad dipped in vinegar.
- Never use hot water, harsh soaps, ammonia or washing soda on silver or gold-rimmed glasses.
- A well-lathered shaving brush cleans deeply etched or hobnailed glass especially well.
- If eggs have dried on your patterned glass tableware, rub off the residue with a slice of lemon.

September

- 1452 Johann Guttenberg's Bible is the first published book
- 1522 The Victoria, one of the surviving ships of Ferdinand Magellan's expedition, returns to Sanlcar de Barrameda in Spain, becoming the first ship to circumnavigate the world
- 1715 King Louis XIV of France dies after a reign of 72 years. It is the longest reign of any major European monarch
- 1865 Joseph Lister, creator of Listerine, performs the world's first antiseptic surgery
- 1901 Hubert Cecil Booth patents the vacuum cleaner
- 1934 Lou Gehrig plays in his 1500th consecutive game
- 1960 The Flintstones make their primetime debut
- 1981 Sandra Day O'Connor was the 102nd Justice sworn in as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, the first woman to hold the office.

Health Advice: Gear Up for Better Fitness

Let's face it: Some of us need a little extra nudge down the path to better fitness. If your interest is high- or low-tech gear, one or more of the following may be just what the doctor ordered to increase fitness motivation.

Pedometer.

Step by step, you're getting fitter. And, with one of these inexpensive gadgets strapped to your waist, you can track exactly how many steps you're taking. Use a pedometer to learn how many steps you usually take during a walk or run, and then build on that number. Try participating in the 10,000 Steps Per Day program (which is around 5 miles) and accurately keep track of your progress. Visit www.thewalkingsite.com for more information. *Pedometer price:* \$5 and up.

Heart rate monitor.

This device helps you track the intensity of your workout. Some models fit over the chest, while others are worn on the wrist. The monitor tells you how rapidly your heart is beating. It can be set for a target range to let you know if you need to step up the pace or back off a bit. *Heart rate monitor price:* \$30 and up.

Digital scale.

Find out, to the decimal point, how much weight you're losing. A healthy goal is to lose 1-2 pounds per week. Any more than that isn't healthy, unless you're under the strict supervision of a doctor. *Digital scale price:* \$15 and up.

New Shoes.

Exercising in worn-out shoes increases your risk of injury. Choose shoes designed for the activity you do. Some shoe models are very high tech and have special gel insoles or onboard computer processors that automatically adjust the cushioning of the shoe. The most important thing, however, is to find a comfortable shoe that provides adequate support. *New shoe price:* \$40 and up.

Water bottle.

It's important to stay hydrated when you're working hard. Choose a rugged water bottle that can be comfortably carried. Stick with a bottle that you can wash and reuse instead of one that you'll use once and throw away. *Water bottle price:* \$5 and up.

Tunes.

Sometimes, a good beat is all the motivation you need to get moving. Clip on a portable radio, or load your favorite music onto an MP3 player and go. Just make sure that the volume's not too high – you want to keep your ears in good shape, too. *Portable music player price:* \$15 and up.

Kid Corner: When to Call Your Child in Sick

Sometimes it's easy to tell when your child has to stay home from school or daycare. Technicolor vomit and a cough like a barking seal are total no-brainers. But what if your child had a slight fever last night, went to bed early, but now seems completely fine this morning. Do you keep her home today or send her off as usual? Here are what some top pediatricians have to say on the matter.

Fever

Ok to go: If your child is over 4 months old, has a temperature below 100.4°F, is receptive to drinking fluids and is acting normal otherwise, go ahead and send him to school or daycare.

Stay home: If, however, your child is younger than four months, call the doctor immediately. Older children should stay home if their temperatures are above 100.4°F. A feverish child is not only considered contagious, but is probably not feeling well enough to participate and learn.

Vomiting

Ok to go: If your child heaved only once in 24 hours, it's not likely that she has an infection nor at risk for dehydration. Sometimes kids throw up because mucus left over from a cold has drained. It's not worth a sick day.

Stay home: If your child has vomited two or more times in 24 hours, cancel your plans. Keep an eye out for signs of dehydration (she's urinating less frequently, her urine is dark yellow, she's not producing tears when she cries). Offer small amounts of fluid frequently, increasing the amount as tolerated. If there is no improvement in a few days, call the doctor.

Diarrhea

Ok to go: If your child's stools are only slightly loose and he's acting normally, there's no cause to worry. Some kids develop "toddler's diarrhea," triggered by too much juice. As long as the poop isn't excessive, he can head to daycare as usual.

Stay home: Kids who have the runs more than three times a day and/or have poop so watery it leaks out a diaper should stay home. There is likely an infection that can spread. Keep an eye out for signs of dehydration. If you see blood or mucus in the stool, call a doctor.

Sore Throat

Ok to go: A sore throat accompanied by a runny nose is often just due to simple irritation from the draining mucus; send him off as long as he's fever free.

Stay home: If the achy throat is accompanied by swollen glands, a fever, headache, or stomachache, it's time to go to the doctor for a strep test. If it is strep, he can go back to school once he's been on antibiotics for a full day.

Start the school year off right with some delicious new brown bag lunches. Grapes, dried apricots or mango slices, a granola bar, or a cup of yogurt are some great-tasting side snacks to accompany these healthy lunches. Include a bottle of water or juice that you can wash and re-use for an eco-friendly beverage option.

Each Serves 1

Turkey Wrap

Brush a small soft flour tortilla (preferably whole grain) with 1-2 teaspoons of honey mustard. Top with 1-2 ounces of thinly sliced turkey breast, 1-2 ounces sliced Swiss cheese, and 5-6 baby spinach leaves. Roll it up tightly and slice at an angle.

Tomato Soup and Cheese Sandwich

Put one cup of prepared organic tomato soup in a thermos. For the cheese sandwich, top one slice of whole-wheat bread with 2 ounces of sliced mozzarella cheese and some thin-sliced tomato and cucumber; top with the second slice of bread. For added flavor, spread 1-2 teaspoons of basil pesto on the bread before topping with cheese.

Leftover-Chicken Salad

Cube some grilled or roasted chicken breast (making 1/2 cup cubed chicken) and toss with 2 tablespoons of chopped celery, 1 tablespoon shredded carrot, some mixed greens, 1 table spoon mayo, and a little Dijon or yellow mustard. Put it all inside a whole-grain pita pocket.

History of Labor Day

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well being of our country. The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City.

Better Driving Equals Better Mileage

Everyone is experiencing pain at the pump these days. With gas prices continually on the rise, drivers need to find ways to get the most out of every gallon. Here are a few tips to help you boost your vehicle's gas mileage:

Drive Smarter. Stay within the speed limit, avoid aggressive driving, and brake and start smoothly. Studies have shown that moderate driving reduces gas consumption by an average of 31 percent, and driving at a reduced speed saves an average of 12 percent.

Use Cruise Control. Use cruise control whenever possible on level highways, but avoid using it on hilly roads where it forces the engine to struggle to maintain speed. Instead, maintain speed going up the hill and remove your foot from the gas pedal on the downside, allowing gravity to do the job of moving the car. Smart use of cruise control can improve gas efficiency by 7 percent.

Get Accurate Directions. Know where you're going. Driving around while lost can lead to backtracking, excessive idling and unnecessary miles – all major gas wasters.

Plan Your Route. For daily driving tasks (like going to work and running errands), compare routes to see which one is likely to save the most gas. Remember, the shortest distance is not necessarily the best gas-saving route. Idling in heavy stop-and-go traffic can consume up to a gallon of gas or more per hour. You may save gas with a route that is slightly longer in miles, but where less traffic allows you to keep moving at a consistent, moderate pace.

Change Your Footwear. When driving, consider wearing thin-soled shoes or – if the law in your state permits – driving barefoot. The sensitivity of your skin will help you brake and accelerate gently, thus improving gas mileage.

Sign Up for Discounts and Incentives. Choose gas stations and credit cards that offer cash-back programs. Many entertainment venues, hotels, and restaurants offer discounts and incentives to reward patrons for spending the money on a drive to their destination, too.

Choose People Power! Park your car at a fast food place, bank or pharmacy and walk inside instead of sitting in an idling car. Better yet – walk or ride a bike to get where you need to go. The best way to conserve gas is simply not to use it!

... Carpet Talk... Prevent Color Loss

Just like any colored fabric, carpet can fade and lose its color if not properly cared for. Here are a few things you can do to prevent color loss in your carpet.

Keep Out the Sun! We all love bright, sunny rooms, but too much direct sunlight will fade your carpeting. So when you're not in a room, pull the shades closed.

Keep Hands and Feet Clean! You may not realize it, but the chemicals and products you handle regularly can inadvertently stain your carpet. Bleach, acne medications, even athlete's foot medication can remove the color from your carpet. So make sure you and the other people in your household wash their hands and keep socks on their feet.

Treat Pet Stains Immediately! If Fluffy or Fido has an accident on the carpet, clean it up as quickly as possible. Pet urine that is left on carpeting can cause permanent color loss.

Call the Professionals! Many stains on carpet become color loss situations when consumer products are used incorrectly. These products can chemically "burn" or destroy carpet fibers in the process. More importantly, certain stains require very specific treatments to properly remove the stain. Using the wrong type of chemical can permanently "set" the stain or destroy the fibers, as stated above.

So when faced with tricky spots and stains, call Guarantee System at 616-451-0787. We've got the right tools and products to save you carpet, and its color!



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GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT #1254

1518 Steele Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

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Phone: 616-451-0787

Fax: 616-451-8303

www.guaranteesystem.com

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Receive a FREE bottle of carpet spot remover with your next service of \$75 or more

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.

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