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## Time for Your Spring Home Maintenance Checklist

There is no better month than April to ready your home for warmer weather ahead and prepare for more time spent outside.

**Inspect Your Roof** - Winter rain and snow can damage shingles and create possible roof leaks. Your first inspection can be done safely from the ground using a pair of binoculars. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, about 500,000 people are injured in ladder-related accidents each year. If you spot roof damage, hire a professional for roof repairs.

**Clean Your Gutters** - It's important to clean your gutters and downspouts after each winter. Clogged gutters and downspouts can cause eaves to rot, and rotted leaves can invite a new set of problems like wood rot and insect infestation. Properly maintained gutters and downspouts should divert water away from your home and its foundation.

**Check for Termites** - The beginning of spring is a great time to check for signs of termites. Keep an eye out for these winged insects. Termites swarm in the spring, so if you spot swarms of winged insects flying out of a hole in the woodwork, it's probably termites. Contact a licensed professional pest control company for an evaluation.

**Check Your Foundation** - Take a walk around the exterior of your home this month and examine your home's foundation. Check for cracks in the masonry and loose tiles.

**HVAC Check-up** - Have your HVAC system tuned up before the arrival of warm weather. Hire a trained professional for the inspection and maintenance. Maintaining your HVAC system all year can save you from unexpected emergency repairs at very inconvenient times.

**Make Your Windows Sparkle** - Spring clean your windows inside and out using a window cleaning solution and a squeegee or a soft cloth. Avoid using high-pressure spray washers as they may chip caulking or damage screens. If your windows have screening, remove the screens and clean those as well.

**Refresh Exterior Paint & Stain** - Whether touching up your deck or giving the whole house a new look, spring is a great time for painting and staining projects. The weather is not too hot and shrubbery near the house is less in the way. And if you're planning to sell, an attractive exterior can help increase the value of your home.

**Your Sprinkler System** - Make sure your sprinkler system is operational before the hot weather hits. Run your system through all zones and walk your property to inspect your system. Make sure there are no broken or damaged heads. Adjust sprinkler heads that hit your house, windows, porches, and sidewalks.

**Tackle Outdoor Landscaping** - Caring for your yard and garden is definitely a year-round activity, but now is the time to revive the landscaping after cold, wet months. Put pruning, planting, and fertilizing on your list. Be sure to remove debris around the AC unit so it can run most effectively and efficiently.

## April Calendar

**April 1** - April Fool's Day

**April 15** - Tax Day

**April 22** - Earth Day

**April 25** - Arbor Day

## Homeowner Tips



### Time to Change the Air Filters

Make sure to schedule a maintenance checkup for your HVAC system every spring and fall, but in the meantime, filters need to be checked once a month. When they're dirty, change them; dirty filters shorten the lifespan of your system. Fortunately, it's easy to do. First, check your owner's manual for the right part number in order to buy a new filter. Then turn off your HVAC system while you work, remove the old filter and slide the new one in place.

## Your Spring Gardening Checklist for April

Just as you give your house a good spring cleaning to freshen it up after a long winter, you can take a similar approach to getting your garden in shape for the warmer months. Tackle all your outdoor tasks like a pro with this spring gardening checklist.

**Clean up Flowerbeds:** Clear away dead leaves, remove winter mulch and cut back last year's dried foliage. Remember to wear gardening gloves!

**Add Fresh Mulch:** This will give your yard a polished look and help keep your plants hydrated during hotter months.

**Prune Trees and Shrubs:** Cut away dead branches and leaves. This will also give you a better crop of flowers or fruit by summer's end.

**Plant Vegetables:** Cool-season vegetables like potatoes, artichokes, peas, and lettuce germinate best in cool soil, so plant them in early spring, once the soil has thawed. They should be ready to harvest by early summer.

**Clean Bird Feeders and Fountains:** Clean your fountains and refresh the water. Clean out your feeders and refresh with new seed.



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## Easy Pasta Primavera

Primavera means "spring" in Italian and is a delicious way to celebrate the early bounty of spring.

### INGREDIENTS

Farfelle Pasta (1 box)

Veggies: 1 Sweet or red onion, 1 Zucchini, 1 yellow squash, 2 carrots, 1 bell pepper, 1/2 cup peas, 10 grape tomatoes, halved

1 Tablespoon each: Garlic, dried oregano, fresh thyme. Add salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with parsley and fresh lemon zest.

1/2 cup Virgin Olive Oil

1 Cup Grated Parmesan Cheese

### DIRECTIONS

Pour 1/4 cup olive oil into a large skillet and heat. Add spices and chopped vegetables and stir. Cook on high until onion begins to brown. Cover and turn heat to low for 10 minutes or until vegetables are soft but not mushy, then set aside. In a separate pot, boil water. When water comes to a boil, add your pasta and boil for 10 minutes or until al dente. Immediately drain and then add to the skillet with your sauteed veggies. Transfer pasta and veggies to a large bowl, add the remainder of olive oil and toss together.

Serve in large shallow bowls and garnish with parmesan, parsley and lemon zest.

