



GUIDE TO SPRING CLEANING

Roll up your sleeves and prepare to welcome spring. PBS hit series *This Old House* offers some DIY ideas for your home and garden, WCNY members share what they do to get ready for the warmer temperatures, and we're featuring some practical cleaning agents you can find right inside your pantry or bathroom closet.

Welcome Spring

Members' Choice

Thank you to our members for submitting ways to get ready for spring. Do you have a tip or technique? Share it with us at wcny.org/springcleaning.



Open your windows and let the smell of spring enter your home.



Pump some air into your basketball, dust off your running shoes or buy a new pair to treat your feet.



Replace batteries in smoke detectors and flashlights. Throw away old batteries at Wegmans.



If you have children, encourage them to clean up their rooms and play areas.



Flip your mattress to keep its shape, and keep it clean by vacuuming on a low setting.

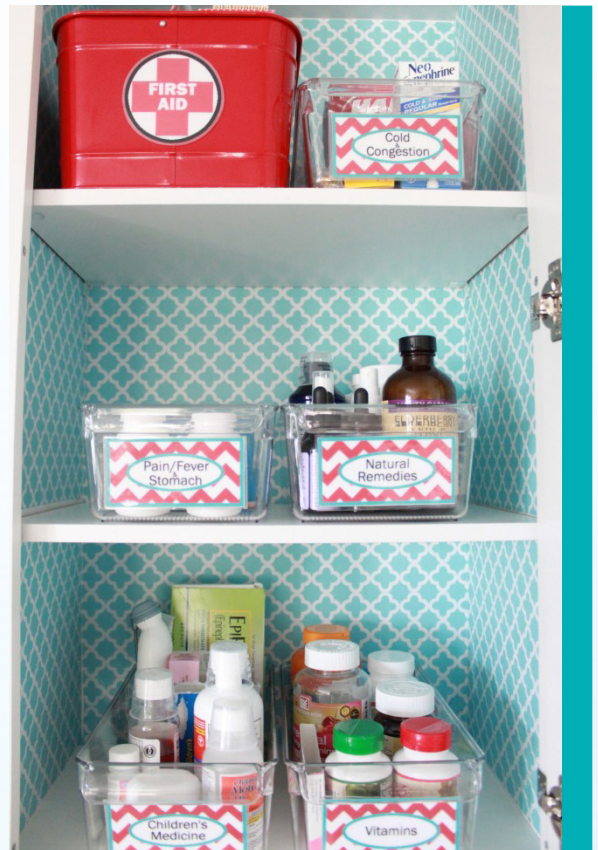


Remove the telltale signs of winter from the garage. Use a power washer to spray away road salt and dirt from the floor. Drain gas out of the snow blower and put gas in the lawnmower.



De-stress your mind by scheduling a relaxation day at the spa, meditate right in your own home or check out a yoga studio.

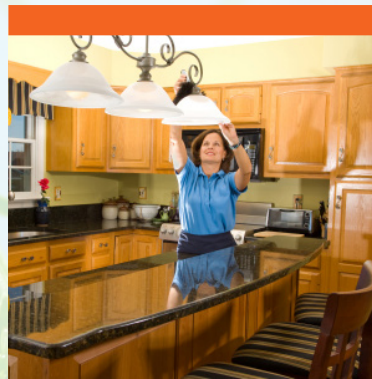
If your toilet bowl needs a little extra TLC, try Kool-Aid. Empty a packet into the toilet and let it sit for a couple of minutes. Then brush it down the sides and flush.



De-clutter your medicine cabinet by throwing away medications with old expiration dates. Use small baskets to help keep everything organized.



Get in the spring mindset by traveling down south to warmer weather, where bushes, plants, and trees are in full bloom.



If spring cleaning isn't your thing, enlist a cleaning service and gardener to help. Drop off the car with an auto detailer to remove winter salt and dirt.

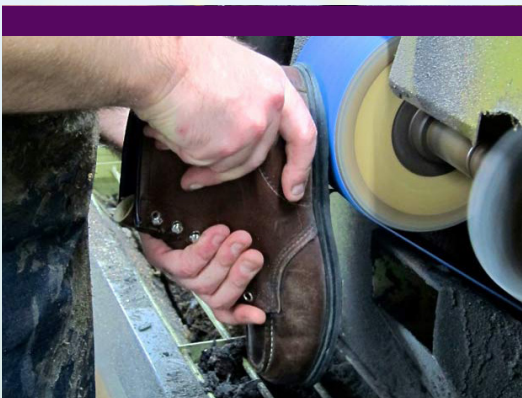
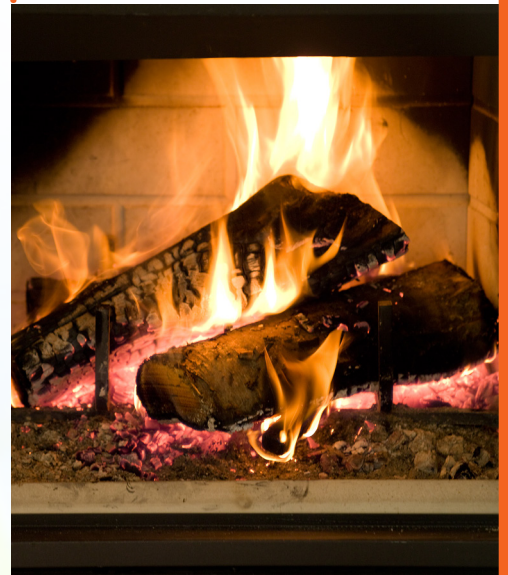
Clean your dryer vent thoroughly.





Check for outdated spices and buy replacements.

Collect chimney ashes and sprinkle outside.



Retire your winter boots for the season. Take them to the shoe repair to keep them in tiptop shape for next year.

Freshen your patio umbrella. If it's a removeable fabric umbrella, throw it in the washing machine. If it's not, mix water with mild soap or laundry detergent and wash with your outdoor hose.



Power wash winter leftover debris on your deck or patio to make your outdoor living room sparkle.

Use a small toothbrush or scrubber to clean residue in the grates of your grill.





Dust off your power tools to get ready for some spring renovation projects.

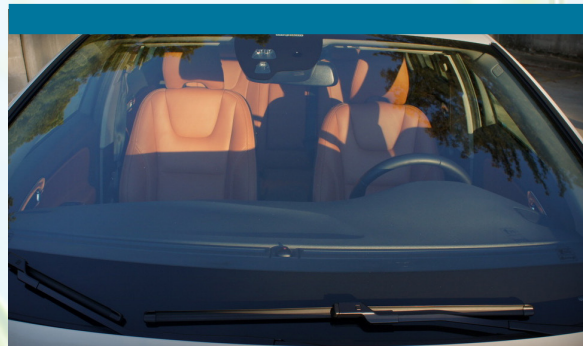


Ground Fault Circuits need to be replaced every 3-5 years.

Brighten up your headlights with toothpaste. Use a rag and gently rub the toothpaste on the light. Then remove the toothpaste with a clean rag.



Say goodbye to salt with *Motorweek* recommended Eastwood's Salt Neutralizer. Mix it in a regular garden sprayer and spray it under your vehicle to prevent damage.



Get rid of streaks on your windshield by pouring cola over the glass. The carbonation helps fight grime.

Remove salt from your car's carpet by mixing a quarter cup of liquid dishwashing soap with a cup of warm water. Use a white cloth and dab the salt stains. Rinse the area with warm water.



Tackle outdoor spring cleaning with *'This Old House'*



***This Old House* airs Thursdays at 9 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. on WCNY**

March is notoriously unpredictable. Shrubs can be crusty with snow on the first of the month, and then, a couple of weeks later, temperatures can warm up enough for flower and leaf buds to show signs of life.

Still, some early spring cleanup tasks can't hurt. So go ahead and remove burlap from trees and shrubs as the weather warms. Prune away the sad winter branches to make room for new growth. Cut back spent perennials and pull up old annuals.

Give your green patch a clean start with this checklist.

Trees and Shrubs | Prune away dead and damaged branches

Where tree or shrub branches have been damaged by cold, snow, and wind, prune back to live stems; use a handsaw for any larger than ½ inch in diameter. Shaping hedges with hand pruners, rather than electric shears, prevents a thick outer layer of growth that prohibits sunlight and air from reaching the shrub's center. Prune summer-flowering shrubs, such as Rose of Sharon, before buds swell, but wait to prune spring bloomers, like forsythia, until after they flower.

Trim overgrown evergreens back to a branch whose direction you want to encourage.



Perennials and Grasses | Cut back and divide perennials as needed

Prune flowering perennials to a height of 4-5 inches and ornamental grasses to 2-3 inches to allow new growth to shoot up. Where soil has thawed, dig up perennials, such as daylilies and hostas, to thin crowded beds; divide them, leaving at least three stems per clump; and transplant them to fill in sparse areas. Cut back winter-damaged rose canes to one inch below the blackened area. On climbers, keep younger green canes and remove older woody ones; neaten them up by bending the canes horizontally and tipping the buds downward. Use jute twine or gentle Velcro fasteners to hold the canes in place.

A pair of sharp bypass pruners makes a clean cut on both dead and living foliage.



Beds and Borders | Clean up around plants

Rake out fallen leaves and dead foliage (which can smother plants and foster disease), pull up spent annuals, and toss in a wheelbarrow with other organic yard waste. Once the threat of frost has passed, remove existing mulch to set the stage for a new layer once spring planting is done. Push heaved plants back into flowerbeds and borders, tamping them down around the base with your foot, or use a shovel to replant them. Now is a good time to spread a pelletized fertilizer tailored to existing plantings on the soil's surface so that spring rains can carry it to the roots. Add a 5-10-10 fertilizer around bulbs as soon as they flower to maximize bloom time and feed next season's growth. Use pins to fasten drip irrigation lines that have come loose and a square-head shovel to give beds a clean edge and keep turf grass from growing into them.



Lawn Care | Prep damaged lawn areas for spring seeding

In colder climates grass starts growing in April, but early spring is a good time to test the soil's pH so that you can assemble the right amendments. Remove turf damaged by salt, plows, or disease to prepare for the seeding that should follow in a few weeks. Work in a ½-inch layer of compost to keep the new seed moist, increasing the germination rate. Begin seeding once forsythia starts blooming in your area. In warmer climates, March is a good time to add the first dose of fertilizer and crabgrass treatment.

Remove dead turf with a square metal rake, then flip it over to spread compost.



Paths and Patios | Neaten up hardscape surfaces

Rake escaped gravel back into aggregate walkways and patios, and order more gravel to spread in large depressions, which often form near the driveway's apron. Refill joints between flagstones by sweeping in new sand or stone dust; water with a hose to set it, then repeat. If the freeze-thaw cycle has heaved pavers out of place, remove them and replenish the base material as needed before setting pavers back in. Use a pressure washer with a low-pressure tip to remove slippery algae spots or leaf stains from patios and walkways.



Fences and Trellises | Patch or replace and paint worn wood

Remove badly rotted or damaged pickets, boards, or lattice, then scrub wood structures clean with a mix of 2 gallons water, 2 quarts bleach, and 1 cup liquid soap; let dry. Patch rotted sections with wood epoxy; install new wood as needed. Check wobbly fence posts to see if they need replacing. Scrape off old paint, then sand wood all over with 60 grit to prep for a new finish coat. Once temperatures go above 50° F, brush on a new coat of paint or stain.



Surprise Spring Cleaners



Vinegar and baking soda aren't the only pantry and health care items you can use in your fight against household dirt. Change up your spring cleaning routine with some new ingredients suggested by the pros at *This Old House*.

Ketchup / Take away rust

Polish away rusty or dull spots in a copper sink by wiping on this condiment, which acts as a mild acid.

Nail-Polish Remover / Spot clean your laminate floors

Erase everything from paint splashes to ink stains from laminate floors by adding a few drops of an acetone formula to a rag.



Baby Wipes / Keep your antiques looking great

Eliminate dust and dirt from antique furniture without marring fine finishes by rubbing with gentle, fragrance-free wipes.

Oven Cleaner / Fight drain stains on your bathroom tub

Dissolve drain stains on a white enameled cast-iron tub with a coat of oven cleaner. Let sit for an hour or two, then wipe with a sponge or scrub stubborn stains with a plastic abrasive pad.



Savor Syracuse

Please join us Thursday, April 7, 2016 for the return of SavorSyracuse, an event to benefit Food Bank of Central New York at SKY Armory.

Enjoy food and beverage pairings from select local restaurants, wineries, and breweries while bidding on exciting auction items.

6:00 - 8:30 pm
SKY Armory
351 South Clinton Street
Syracuse, NY 13202

For more information or to purchase tickets
visit foodbankny.org or call (315) 437-1899 ext. 260

 **Food Bank**
of Central New York