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Spring Maintenance Ideas for Your Home



Inspecting your home on a regular basis and following good maintenance practices are the best ways to protect your investment in your home. There is always something to do around the house, especially when the season changes. Spring is the time to assess winter damage, start repairs and prepare for warmer months. Here are 5 tips for you and your clients to properly maintain your homes this spring.

Exterior inspection and repairs

Take advantage of the spring weather to do an outdoor inspection of your home. Examine the foundation wall to see if it sustained any damage over the winter. Watch for cracks or leaks and repair as required. Look for low spots that may have formed next to the foundation that could trap water. Homeowners or landlords can prolong the life of an asphalt driveway by filling cracks; and every two to five years, apply a driveway surface finish.

Clean out the gutters and downspouts

In winter, gutters and downspouts often cease to work as they fill with ice. That winter build-up can damage eavestroughs. Check them every spring for leaks and for sections that are low, or only loosely attached to the roof. Remove debris and use a hose to flush out the eavestroughs, starting at the upper end, clearing away smaller debris and at the same time checking for leaks and pooling.

Hosing will also show if all the downspouts and their extensions are working right: this is important because, if the extensions are detached or leak, water will soak into the ground right at the foundation leading to a damp basement.

Look for moisture

When warm, moist air comes into contact with a surface that is too cold, moisture condenses. Over time, if the air in your house is too humid, the result may be damage to the house structure, your possessions and possibly your health. You can keep your basement dry by ensuring the surrounding landscaping, driveways and walkways slope away from the house.

Adequate ventilation to deal with kitchen and bathroom moisture, good air circulation and maintaining adequate heat throughout your house are important and effective methods to help prevent moisture problems.

Maintain your heat recovery ventilator (HRV) and other ventilation equipment

Help keep your house a clean, healthy living environment by maintaining your ventilation system whether it is a simple exhaust fan or HRV. For HRVs, check your HRV owner's manual for instructions on cleaning the heat exchange core. Vacuuming the filters and core and washing it with soap and water will reduce dust that can build up inside the core. Vacuum exhaust grilles and clean the fan blades of bathroom fans to help ensure good airflow.

Begin spring landscaping

Once the snow has completely melted, undertake spring landscape maintenance and, if necessary, fertilize young trees. To encourage a lush lawn, fertilize the grass before the summer and re-sow to replace dead patches of grass.

By following these tips, you will be able to better protect your investment and keep your home a safe and healthy place to live.

A healthier take on summer cocktails



(NC) With sweet-tart berries, notes of floral hibiscus and Mojito influences of mint and lime, this bubbly kombucha-based mocktail is a refreshing summer sipper. It uses unrefined Demerara sugar rather than white for its richness and molasses-like finish, sure to quench your thirst as the weather warms up.

“If using berries that are more sour than sweet, stir in a few drops of honey to help balance out the tartness,” suggests Michelle Pennock, executive chef for the President’s Choice Test Kitchen.

Berry Kombucha “Fauxito” Mocktail

Prep time: 10 Minutes

Ready in: 10 Minutes

Serves: 1

Ingredients:

- 3 each fresh blackberries and raspberries, plus additional for garnish
- 10 fresh mint leaves
- 2 tsp (10 mL) packed Demerara sugar
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup (50 mL) coconut water not from concentrate
- ½ cup (125 mL) PC Organics Raspberry Hibiscus Kombucha
- 1 cup (250 mL) ice cubes
- 1 sprig fresh mint, for garnish

Directions:

1. Place blackberries and raspberries in highball glass. Add five mint leaves and sugar; muddle with muddler or handle of wooden spoon until mint is bruised and fragrant and berries are mashed.
2. Pour in lime juice, coconut water and kombucha. Stir in ice cubes and remaining five mint leaves.
3. Garnish with additional berries and mint sprig.

Chef's tip: To turn this mocktail into a cocktail, substitute coconut water with white rum.

Nutritional information per serving: calories 90, fat 0 g, sodium 20 mg, carbohydrates 21 g, fibre 3 g, sugars 15 g, protein 1 g.

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Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. It would be a pleasure to assist you or any one of your friends or family members!

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