

THE
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION
HOMEOWNER'S

ULTIMATE GUIDE

TO SPRING 2017

TEN THINGS TO DO IN BRYAN/ COLLEGE STATION THIS SPRING

Spring is a wonderful time of year in Bryan/College Station! Here are ten events taking place in the coming months to get you out and enjoying all our area has to offer.

BLUE BUNNY BREAKFAST & EGG HUNT
April 1, 2017
Sue Haswell Memorial Park

APRIL FIRST FRIDAY
April 7, 2017
Downtown Bryan

EASTER CELEBRATION
April 8, 2017
George Bush Presidential Library & Museum

DOWNTOWN STREET & ART FAIR
April 8, 2017
Downtown Bryan

PITCH, HIT AND RUN!
April 12, 2017
Bryan Regional Athletic Complex

ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT
April 14, 2017
W.A. Tarrow Park

FIRKIN FEST
April 23, 2017
Downtown Bryan

A LITTLE BIT WICKED
April 30, 2017
Rudder Auditorium,
Texas A&M

**MOVIES IN THE PARK:
ROGUE ONE**
May 26, 2017
Wolf Pen Creek
Amphitheater

STARLIGHT MUSIC SERIES
June 10, 2017
Wolf Pen Creek
Amphitheater

Spring Home Maintenance

CHECKLIST

Maintaining a home can seem like a daunting task. Use this handy checklist to get your home ready for Spring.

Conduct a Safety Check

If you didn't do so when you changed your clocks for Daylight Savings, now's the time to check or replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon dioxide detectors. Use this opportunity to also test fire extinguishers in your home and car to make sure they are working.

Power Wash Windows and Siding

Whether the exterior of your home is made of siding, brick or stone, freshen everything up with a good cleaning using a power washer. While you are at it, wash your windows so you can let the light from outside in.

Get Your Lawn Ready

Apply fertilizer once your grass starts growing in the spring. Test your irrigation system to make sure all of the sprinkler heads pop up as expected, none are clogged or malfunctioning and your timer is set properly.

Clean Out Your Gutters

Remove leaves, twigs and acorns from your gutters. Add screens if you don't have them or check existing screens to make sure they are in good condition.

Clean and Repair Your Deck or Patio

Remove leaves and other debris from your deck or patio. Consider staining or resealing your deck to protect it. Check for loose or spongy boards and insect damage and schedule repairs as needed.

Plant Your Garden

Spring is an ideal time to plant most bedding plants, vegetables and herbs, as well as most seeds. By giving plants a good head start, they can establish a healthy root system before summer hits.

Replace Your HVAC Filter

Replace your filter once a season. If you have pets or allergies, or if you live in a dry or dusty area (especially new subdivisions or along dirt roads), this may need to be done monthly.

Inspect Your Plumbing

Take a look at any exposed pipes and inspect for leaks. Clean faucet aerators. In guest bathrooms or other unused areas, run water in sinks and tubs and flush toilets to remove built-up grime and dust and ensure everything is working properly.

Spring Cleaning

HERE'S WHERE TO DONATE OR DISPOSE OF COMMON HOUSEHOLD ITEMS LOCALLY

WHERE TO DONATE GENTLY USED ITEMS

Salvation Army of Bryan/ College Station

Provides spiritual, social and emotional assistance for men and women to help them re-enter society and return to gainful employment.

- Appliances
- Clothing
- Furniture
- Household Items

Twin City Mission

Helps provide shelter and services for people in need in the community.

- Books
- Clothing
- Furniture
- Housewares
- Kitchen Items

Habitat for Humanity Corpus Christi

Proceeds go towards building housing for low-income families.

- Cabinets
- Carpet
- Doors
- Flooring
- Paint
- Sinks

Heart of Texas Goodwill

Donations help stock merchandise in stores, fund job programs and help keep Bryan/College Station and the surrounding areas green.

- Appliances
- Books
- Clothing
- Electronics
- Furniture
- Household Items

WHERE TO TAKE HOUSEHOLD ITEMS FOR PROPER DISPOSAL



| | |
|---|--|
| Appliances | <i>Bryan Iron & Metal, Twin Oaks Landfill</i> |
| Automotive Fluids | <i>Household Hazardous Waste Collection, AutoZone, Advance Auto Parts and O'Reilly Auto Parts</i> |
| Medications | <i>Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Balcones County Sheriff's Office</i> |
| Compact Fluorescent Bulbs (CFLs) | <i>Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Batteries Plus, Lowe's, Home Depot or IKEA stores</i> |
| Electronics | <i>Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Best Buy, Heart of Texas Goodwill</i> |
| Ink Toner | <i>Best Buy or OfficeMax/Office Depot</i> |
| Batteries | <i>Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Batteries Plus, Bryan Iron & Metal, Bryan Recycling Center or Best Buy (rechargeable batteries)</i> |

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How to mosquito-proof your yard

Spring is such a lovely time of year to enjoy spending time outdoors in Bryan/College Station. Unfortunately, mosquitoes can sometimes spoil our fun. Here are a few ways to prevent these biting insects from hanging out in your yard.

TAKE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Mosquitoes thrive in areas with long grasses, unkempt plants and shrubs and piled up branches and other debris. Keep your grass cut short, and regularly trim back plants and shrubs so they don't harbor mosquitoes. If you've got branches or other wood sources piled up in your yard, make sure to clear it away and keep it from piling up again.

USE NATURAL DETERRENTS

Incorporate natural deterrents into your yard such as citronella, lemon thyme, lemon balm, catnip and feverfew. Natural treatments such as *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* and garlic spray can also help deter mosquitoes.

TRY DIY MOSQUITO CONTROL

Many chemical treatments, traps and bug zappers can help eliminate mosquitoes. Mosquito traps attract mosquitoes by imitating human characteristics, like producing heat and releasing CO₂. Bug zappers use a combination of light and electricity to attract and kill mosquitoes.

REMOVE STANDING WATER

Mosquitoes depend on standing water to reproduce, so take a stroll around your yard a few times a week to make sure there is no water that has accumulated in pots, wheelbarrows and in other areas of your lawn. If you have a birdbath, you can purchase disks which contain a bacteria toxic to mosquito larvae but safe for birds.

INVITE NATURAL PREDATORS IN

Bats, purple martins, dragonflies, toads, and damselflies are natural predators of mosquitoes. They won't do the job on their own, but in combination with other efforts, they can help reduce the mosquito population. You can encourage these mosquito-eaters to visit your yard by creating a draw, like bat and purple martin houses where they can roost.

Spring gardening tips

Although the planting season in Bryan/College Station is nearly year-round, spring is a great time to either start a garden or make improvements to your existing landscape. Here are some ways you can keep your garden thriving in the year ahead.

REMOVE DEAD GROWTH

Despite our mild climate, leaves, branches and other debris often accumulate in our yard during the winter months. Take advantage of sunny days at the start of the year to remove dead limbs and sticks and to trim or prune plants in your garden to encourage new plant growth and discourage pests and disease.

SELECT NATIVE PLANTS

Did some of your plants not make it through winter, or would you like to expand your beds? Select plants that are already adapted to our climate, as native species require less watering and care.

NOURISH YOUR SOIL

Even the healthiest lawn needs nurturing twice a year using fertilizer. Once plants are established (or healthy above-ground growth appears from seeds) mulch your garden with compost, wood chips, bark or other mulching materials to help retain moisture.

WATER SMART

Be sure to water regularly, especially when plants are getting established. New plants can often use daily watering until they develop healthy roots. When you water, water slowly and deeply. Avoid watering during the hottest part of the day, as water will evaporate before it can sink into the lower layers of soil.

Ways To Protect Your Pets (and Yourself) From Fleas

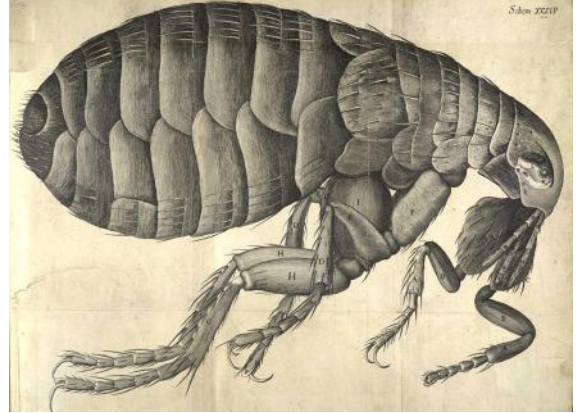
One of the more pesky pests we see during the spring months are fleas. Here are some ways to protect your pets and your family from these biting insects.

TREAT YOUR YARD

In the early spring, treat your yard with beneficial nematodes (*Steinernema carpocapsae*) that will kill flea larvae as well as adult fleas. Nematodes are safe for your gardens and can kill more than 90% of flea larvae in the soil within a single day. Make your yard less hospitable to fleas by trimming back weeds and keeping your lawn mowed throughout the year.

TREAT YOUR HOME

To prevent having fleas inside of your home, vacuum regularly to capture fleas and eggs in carpeting and floorboards. Launder all pet bedding (and human bedding if pets sleep there). Sprinkle pet bedding and rugs with diatomaceous earth, a natural, nontoxic powder. Leave it for a few hours and then vacuum it up. Use products containing cedar oil or shavings which are safe for cats and dogs and will repel and kill fleas around the house. Try flea traps that use incandescent light bulbs to attract fleas, which will get caught on sticky paper.



TREAT YOUR PETS

Try apple cider vinegar as a non-toxic flea repellent. Add equal parts of vinegar and water to a spray bottle, and apply to your pet's fur as well as to their bedding. Avoid getting the spray in your pet's eyes, noses and ears. For dogs, you can add a few drops of lavender or cedar essential oils to the spray, but don't add oils if using the spray on cats. Give your dog a bath with a nontoxic flea shampoo or Dawn dishwasher detergent (which works equally well and is safe for pets and the environment). Work up a lather and leave on for at least 5 minutes before rinsing. Use a flea comb on cats. Just like you did for carpets, you can dust your pets with diatomaceous earth. Work the powder into the fur, but try not to get too much dust in the air as it can be irritating to the lungs for both you and your pets.

Pruning Dos and Don'ts

Pruning plants can help maintain plant health, prevent overgrowth, “train” plants and improve the quality of a plant’s flowers, fruit, foliage or stems. Before you get started, make sure to consult this list of how you should—and how you shouldn’t prune.



DO

- Wear pants and a long-sleeved shirt, along with protective eyewear and gloves.
- Check your plants in the early spring or after a storm for broken, dead or diseased areas which can be removed.
- Prune flowering plants shortly after flowering so you don’t disrupt buds.
- Trim plants so that they are 10 feet away from your home and power lines.
- Keep your tools clean and sharp.
- Use ladders and tools safely.

DON'T

- Remove more than 30% of a tree’s foliage at one time, since trees depend on their leaves to generate food.
- Trim a newly planted tree in its first year, unless to remove broken or dead limbs.
- Leave more than ¼ inch stub when you are removing a shrub’s side branches, as anything longer is vulnerable to disease.
- Prune oak trees between February and June to prevent the spread of oak wilt.
- Use hand pruning shears to cut larger branches, since that could ruin your shears or damage the plant.
- Hesitate to contact a certified arborist if you have a pruning job that requires the skills, expertise or tools that you may not possess.

Easy Home Improvement Projects

Looking for a simple way to give your home an update? Here are some ways to spruce up your living space without breaking the bank or entering into a huge renovation.



UPDATE YOUR HOME'S FRONT ENTRANCE

Updating your home's entrance is one of the best and least expensive ways to make your entire home more attractive and inviting. Sometimes, a home entrance refresh is as simple as installing a new front door or applying a fresh coat of paint to your existing door along with a new lock, doorknob, and fittings. Repainting any wooden trim around your front door and windows is another great way to upgrade your entrance's look. While you are at it, you can add a new exterior light fixture, a new welcome mat and some potted plants. If you have a chair or swing on your front porch, add some cushions or throw pillows for a lovely pop of color.

GIVE YOUR BATHROOM A FACELIFT

Give the bathroom a fresh new look with a new toilet and sink or vanity. You can install new sink fixtures yourself, paint a fresh color on the walls or use molding to frame your plain, builder-grade mirror. Add new wall hangings, towels or a new bath mat to add some color or brighten up your space.

UPDATE YOUR KITCHEN'S APPEARANCE

Any home improvement project involving electricity may seem daunting, but switching out your old light fixtures for fresh new ones is actually easy to do. Simply turn off the power to your kitchen at your home's fuse box, and you're ready to go. Grab your screwdriver, set up a ladder to make the job easier, and you're ready to unscrew the old fixture and disconnect the wires. Then reverse the process to install the new fixture. If you need (and can afford) new appliances, you can really upgrade the look of your kitchen.

CREATE AN OUTDOOR PATIO

Create a patio area, whether small or large, using flagstones and bags of crushed granite and sand from your local home improvement store. Simply clear the area, pour and smooth out the sand, and then lay down the flagstones in an appealing pattern. Finish it off with crushed granite poured between the flagstones, and voila—you have a rustic and attractive new space that's ready for potted plants, a bench and any other enhancements you like.