

THE ORLANDO HOMEOWNER'S

ULTIMATE GUIDE

TO SPRING 2017

TEN THINGS TO DO IN ORLANDO THIS SPRING

There's never a lack of things to do here in Orlando. Here are ten events happening this spring to get you out and enjoying all the greater Orlando area has to offer.

INTERNATIONAL FLOWER & GARDEN FESTIVAL
March 1 - 29, 2017
Epcot in Disney World

FIESTA IN THE PARK
April 1 - 2, 2017
Lake Eola Park

SUN 'N FUN FLY-IN EXPO
April 4 - 9, 2017
Lakeland

DISENCHANTED!
April 11 - 29, 2017
The Plaza Live

STAR WARS CELEBRATION
April 13 - 16, 2017
Orange County Convention Center

FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL
April 21 - 30, 2017
Venues in Winter Park & Maitland

MAYSFEST 2017
April 30, 2017
Bob Carr Theatre

MATILDA
May 9 - 14, 2017
Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts

TASTE OF SOUL
May 13, 2017
Festival Park

COUNTRY 500
May 26 - 28, 2017
Daytona International Speedway

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

Mustard Seed Furniture and Clothing Bank

Donations help rebuild the lives of people who have suffered disaster or personal tragedy.

- Tables and Chairs
- Household Items
- Couches
- Clothing and shoes
- Appliances
- Books

Vietnam Veterans of America

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

- Clothing
- Household Items
- Toys

Salvation Army of Orlando

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

Goodwill of Central Florida

Donations help stock merchandise in stores, fund job programs and help central Florida and the surrounding areas green.

- Appliances
- Books
- Clothing
- Electronics
- Furniture
- Household items



WHERE TO TAKE HOUSEHOLD ITEMS FOR PROPER DISPOSAL

Batteries	Orange County Landfill, L.B. McLeod Road Transfer Station, Porter Road Transfer Station, Batteries Plus, Bryan Iron & Metal, Bryan Recycling Center or Best Buy (rechargeable batteries)
Automotive Fluids	Orange County Landfill, L.B. McLeod Road Transfer Station, Porter Road Transfer Station (motor oil only), AutoZone, Advance Auto Parts and O'Reilly Auto Parts
Medication	Orange County Sheriff's Office Headquarters; West, East and South Orange County Sheriff's Substation and Winter Park, Ocoee and Orlando Police Department locations.
Compact Fluorescent Bulbs (CFLs)	Orange County Landfill, Batteries Plus, Lowe's, Home Depot or IKEA stores
Electronics	Orange County Landfill, Best Buy, Heart of Texas Goodwill
Ink Toner	Best Buy or OfficeMax/Office Depot
Plastic Bags	Some grocery stores and dry cleaners
Yard Waste	Put out for Solid Waste Pickup collection

CONTACT US | (407) 265-0665
abchomeandcommercial.com/orlando



How to mosquito-proof your yard

Spring is such a lovely time of year to enjoy spending time outdoors in Orlando. 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 Orlando 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

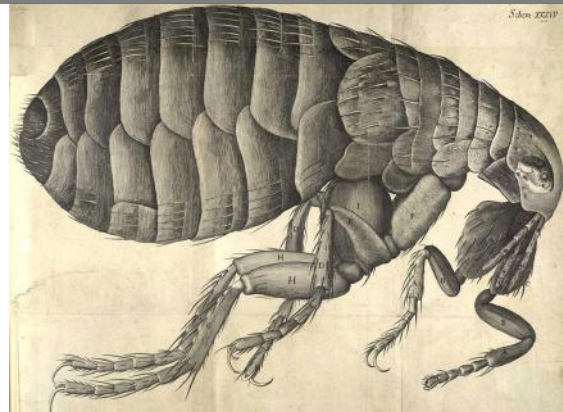
Even the healthiest lawn needs nurturing twice a year using fertilizer. Once plants are established (or healthy above-ground growth appears from seeds) mulch your garden with compost, wood chips, bark or other mulching materials to help retain moisture.

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.

Signs you might have termites

Subterranean termites can cause significant damage to your property. Homeowners rarely see signs of termites, since these insects typically hide inside the walls of a structure. You may be able to check around your home's foundation with a screwdriver, pressing against wooden areas to detect soft spots where termites may have eaten away at the wood. The main thing you can look for if you think you might have termites are termite tubes.



WHAT ARE TERMITE TUBES?

Termites build tubes out of waste materials, saliva and soil to travel between a food source and a nest. These tubes protect these pests from moisture, light and predators.

HOW BIG ARE THEY?

Termite tubes are about as big around as a pencil.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF TERMITE TUBES?

There are four main types of termite tubes. Working tubes link nests in the ground to wooden structures and may appear on the site of concrete or stone foundations. Migratory or exploratory tubes extend out of the soil up to 15 feet but are not touching wood surfaces. Working tubes are most commonly used by termites and can be found around door sills, sub floors, on window frames and around porches, in addition to being located along home foundations. Swarm tubes are a temporary place for termites to stay before they leave to start new colonies. Drop tubes originate from wooden parts of a structure back to the ground and can often resemble stalagmites.

HOW DO I KNOW IF A TERMITE TUBE IS ACTIVE?

Since some tubes you find may no longer be in use by termites, you can test for activity by breaking off a section in the middle and returning in a few days. If the damage to the center has been repaired, termites likely made repairs to the tube. An empty tube may also indicate that the termites are now using another pathway into your home.

HOW CAN I PREVENT A TERMITE INFESTATION?

- Avoid the accumulation of moisture and humidity by diverting water away from your foundation, deducing humidity in your crawl spaces and ensuring crawl spaces have adequate vents.
- Keep shrubs, vines and other plants from growing over and covering vents and avoid plant growth on your home's exterior to prevent a pathway.
- Keep exterior woodwork six inches off the ground.
- Remove wood debris from remodeling or construction projects promptly and keep piles of firewood away from your foundation.

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.