

HOME IMPROVEMENT



April 1, 2023

A supplement of

The Prairie Press

Today's Homeowner[®] presents



TOP 10 MUST DOs

- Have AC and heating systems serviced by a professional. **Time: 1 hour Cost: \$80**
- Clear leaves and debris from the AC condenser unit and perform routine maintenance as needed. **Time: 15 min. Cost: FREE**
- Clean all rain gutters and downspouts; make repairs, if needed. **Time: 1 hour Cost: FREE**
- Clean debris off roof. Check for loose or damaged roof shingles or flashing. Repair, if needed. **Time: 30 min. Cost: FREE**
- Clean and repair window screens. Clean tracks and lubricate. **Time: 2 hours** (more for repairs)
Cost: \$10 (if repairs are needed)
- Clean lint from the clothes dryer's exhaust pipe. **Time: 30 min. Cost: \$10** for vent brush
- Lubricate all door locks along with exterior hinges, gates and garage door tracks. **Time: 30 min. Cost: \$10**
- Sharpen all garden tools and inspect condition of your wheelbarrow. **Time: 30 min. Cost: \$10**
- Prepare all flowerbeds and plants. **Time: 2 hours Cost: varies**
- Reverse ceiling fans to counterclockwise direction to blow air down. **Time: 15 min. Cost: FREE**

TOTAL TIME: 8½ hours COST: \$120

IF TIME & BUDGET ALLOW

- Pressure wash decks, fences, siding and driveways.
- Add additional insulation to the attic.
- Organize at least one closet in your home.
- Dust lampshades and ceiling fan blades.
- Aerate and fertilize the lawn.
- Reseed all bare spots on lawn.

TOTAL TIME: 17 hours COST: \$525

A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA

- Flip mattresses.
- Paint the mailbox and inspect the mailbox post.
- Organize attic, closets, entertainment center and pantry.
- Take all indoor plants outside and clean.
- Test sump pump by pouring a bucket of water to activate.

TOTAL TIME: 6 hours COST: \$15

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Special to The Prairie Press

A stainless steel sink has long been popular in home kitchens and for good reason. Stainless steel is durable, low maintenance and easy to keep clean. The best news may be thanks to its popularity, there are styles for a traditional farmhouse kitchen as well as minimalist.

5 reasons to embrace a stainless steel sink

SPECIAL TO THE PRAIRIE PRESS

Stainless steel has long been popular as a sink material in both home and professional kitchens, and for good reason: It's highly durable, low-maintenance, easy to keep clean, and resistant to heat, rust and stains. With new styles on the market — from ultraminimalist models to traditional farmhouse options — there's a stainless steel sink to complement every style of kitchen.

Want to find out more? We delve into five reasons why this material is such a great option for hardworking kitchen sinks, and look at new and exciting innovations you might not know about.

CUTTING-EDGE DESIGNS

Professional-level quality at home doesn't have to come at the price of style, and you might be surprised by how stainless steel sinks have evolved. Two stainless steel

sink features to look out for that deliver on good looks and increased functionality: a flat bottom and squared-off corners. While these details might be easy to overlook on the showroom floor, in daily life you'll find that ditching the sloped bottom and rounded corners both maximizes space at the bottom of the sink and creates a more contemporary look.

Here's a bonus tip. Team your stainless steel sink with a stylish faucet. Not only do stainless steel faucets look sleek, but many models also include handy features that can make kitchen tasks easier. For example, a faucet that offers high-quality filtration eliminates the need to install a second tap or buy pitchers with filters — saving you time and money, and reducing plastic waste.

STYLE VERSATILITY

Stainless steel suits both modern and



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STAINLESS

From Page 4B

farmhouse-style kitchens equally well. Rhode Island homeowner and design blogger Carli Alves of Made by Carli selected a stainless steel sink for the 1945 Colonial kitchen which she shares with her husband and four children.

"I've always had a stainless steel sink, and we felt like stainless steel was a durable, low-maintenance and affordable option for our renovation," she says. "I think of stainless steel sinks as less of a design feature and more of a neutral accent for a timeless kitchen, so incorporating them into a more traditional or farmhouse style is pretty simple and can be done seamlessly."

In Alves' kitchen, open shelving and pearly marble countertops keep things light and bright and show off her collection of farmhouse pottery. Modern appliances in stainless steel look right at home alongside Shaker-style cabinets and warm wood floors. Alves chose Elkay's Crosstown Workstation sink, "mainly for its space-saving benefits and its sleek, clean lines," she says. "If you like a modern farmhouse or slightly

industrial vibe, you can pair it with an industrial-style matte black faucet, like I did, and let that become the focal point." The faucet is Elkay's Avado faucet with a semiprofessional spout.

PLENTY OF HELPFUL FEATURES

One of the biggest advantages of today's stainless steel sinks is the hardworking features many of them include. Drop-in workstation accessories, for example, are designed to cut down on both prep and cleanup time as well as save counter space. Consider the usefulness of being able to position a cutting board or drying rack over the sink to keep countertops clear and make cleanup quick and easy.

"When we renovated our kitchen, we made the decision to change the layout by removing a peninsula, and it left us short on counter space," Alves says. "The Elkay Crosstown Workstation sink helps solve that problem with its custom accessories, which allow me to go from prep to cleanup without leaving the sink."

Another thing to consider when purchasing a sink is how often you entertain. Find yourself cooking for lots of people with no space to stack pots and pans? Go for a sink

with a raised shelf at the front that opens to a deep 9-inch bowl for extra room. Or consider Elkay's first-of-its-kind Dart Canyon stainless steel farmhouse sink, which has a reversible grid — you can flip it to raise your work surface, making it easier to handle oversized items.

Bonus tip: If you need an ADA-compliant sink but don't want to compromise on style, check out Elkay's line.

For instance, the Dart Canyon model, pictured here, and the Crosstown model are designed to accommodate home cooks with various needs.

BEAUTIFUL, DURABLE AND HYGIENIC

Incorporating trends into the home can be fun, but trends come and go. If you want a sink that will stand the test of time, stainless steel is a great choice for both its style and its durability. "I don't have to worry about my sink rusting or staining, and the rack on the bottom protects it from major scratches," Alves says. "It's extremely low-maintenance, and I think that is just one of the big benefits of stainless steel."

Plus, new edgeless drain designs make stainless steel sinks not only durable but also more hygienic. By eliminating the small

lip typically found between the bottom of the sink and the drain, the Elkay Lustertone Iconix sink drain, for example, is designed to send food particles straight down the drain.

CLASSIC AND ADAPTABLE

It's hard to predict how your kitchen might change in the future, but when it comes to buying a sink that will last through the years and kitchen style changes, stainless steel is the way to go. This metal has been popular for decades and works beautifully with a range of colors and metals, from modern black to antique gold and brushed brass.

"All in all, if you're investing in a kitchen renovation, you should choose what speaks to you and your personal style, and what functions best for your family," Alves says. "I think my stainless steel sink design is classic and will stand the test of time in durability and style."

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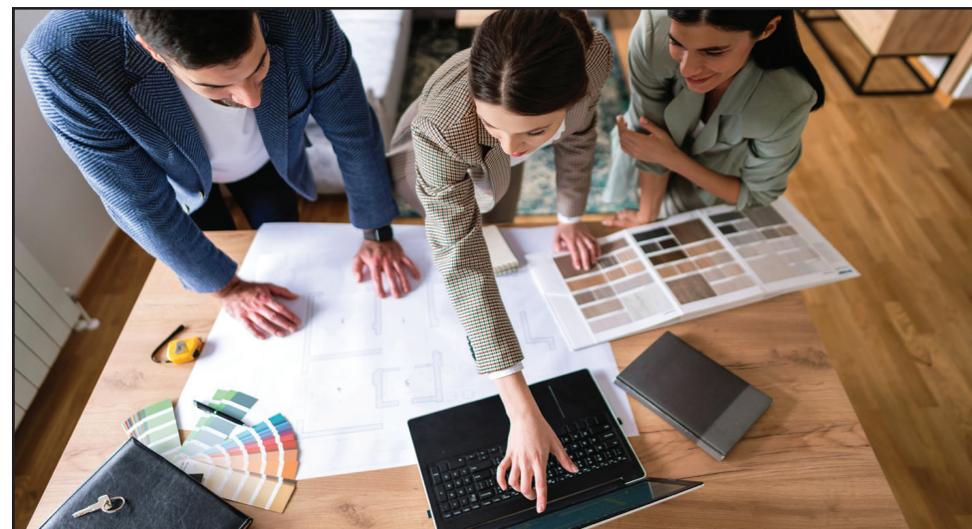


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Spring into your home to-do list

BY NANCY ZEMAN
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In this digital age when homeowners seek answers online for everything from installing a new showerhead to providing a spring checklist for your house, one home improvement expert shines above all others — Danny Lipford of Today's Homeowner.

Lipford, whose multimedia company of television, radio, podcast as well as online articles, is associated with Home Depot and some of the major home improvement brands including Therma-Tru doors, Quikrete, Owens Corning, American Standard and Titebond among many others.

Perhaps best known for his television show, "Today's Homeowner" which reaches 113 million Homes and 1.6-plus million weekly viewers, Lipford is known for giving down-to-earth, easy to follow answers to questions about home improvement.

Lipford — who is based in Mobile, Ala. — is providing a common sense list of spring projects that not only do not break the bank, but keep your home in tip-top shape.

"Spring is here, and with warmer weather comes a different set of home chores you need to take on to keep your home in tip-top shape," Lipford noted. "The same way you cycle out your winter wardrobe for your spring attire, you need to cycle out the cold-weather chores for spring tasks."

Lipford urged homeowners not to take a rain check on these essential spring home maintenance chores.

SERVICE YOUR HVAC SYSTEM

Have a professional service your A/C and heating systems.

The last thing you want is for your air conditioner to break down later in the summer.

CLEAR AWAY LEAVES FROM A/C

Be sure to clear away leaves and debris from the A/C condenser unit.

CLEAN GUTTERS AND ROOF

"Spring clean" rain gutters and downspouts, and make repairs, if necessary.

Clogged overflowing gutters can lead to rotten fascia boards and even cause damage to the foundation. Clean them during dry weather starting at the downspout and working back. Wear gloves and use a gardening trowel or a scoop made from a plastic



Special to The Prairie Press

It looks like Spring is finally trying to break through the colder temperatures as April makes its appearance today. Now is the time to begin not only spring cleaning but completing a checklist to keep your home — both inside and outside — in top shape as warmer weather is on the horizon.

container.

Rather than throwing the leaves and debris away, put them on your compost pile. After the gutters are clean, use a garden hose to wash out the inside, and check to be sure the downspouts are flowing freely.

CLEAR DEBRIS FROM ROOF

Lipford said as long as you the is ladder out, go ahead and clean debris off the roof.

"It's important to clean and inspect your roof regularly, since roof leaks can cause major damage to your home including water damage, rot and mold," the contractor and media guru said.

If the roof is high or steep, consider inspecting it from the ground using binoculars.

Lipford suggested to start by cleaning the roof of leaves, limbs, or any other debris, paying particular attention to problem spots like chimneys, dormers and valleys.

Next, inspect the flashing for damage. Use masonry caulk to seal gaps where the flashing attaches to bricks and urethane caulk to repair the flashing itself.

CLEAN AND REPAIR WINDOW SCREENS

Cleaning and repairing window screens is an important part of preparing the home for warm weather, Lipford noted. After many of us have had our homes closed up during winter, many homeowners look forward to getting fresh air into their homes with open windows.

"While you have your screens out for cleaning, be sure the tracks are clean and lubricated," Lipford said.

Because they are also somewhat fragile, cleaning window screens can be a pain. "You'll need to clean them carefully so that you don't stretch the screen," he observed, noting, "Once a screen is stretched, it's there to stay."

Here are two ways you can get those screens looking shiny new.

The best way to clean window screens is to completely submerge them in soapy water. A child's pool will work for smaller screens, he said.

■ Fill a child's swimming pool with water and add dishwashing detergent.

■ Place the screen in the pool and let it soak for a minute or two.

■ Use a soft bristle brush to gently scrub both sides of the screen and remove the dirt.

■ Once the screen is clean, take it out of the pool, rinse it with a hose and allow to dry.

For larger screens, Lipford said homeowners can build their own pool.

■ Nail four two-by-fours together — each about six feet long, on a flat, level surface to create a square.

■ Over the square, drape a piece of plastic that overlaps each edge by about a foot.

» SPRING, 7C

SPRING

From Page 6C

■ Add some water and detergent, and you have a window screen bathtub.

■ Let the screens soak for a while before you scrub them with a soft bristled brush or a broom.

■ Follow that with a good rinse, and your screens are ready to go.

CLEANING WINDOW SCREENS WITH VACUUM

A much faster way to clean window screens is to use a standard household vacuum or a wet-dry vacuum, Lipford said.

Just attach an upholstery brush and run it over the screen. Almost all vacuums come with such an accessory.

"In just a few seconds you'll have cleaned the screen, and because the bristles are nice and soft, there's no chance of damaging it," he said.

If you do this every year, the screens will stay nice and clean. Give the screens a more thorough cleaning every four to five years using a garden hose and spray attachment.

CLEAN DRYER EXHAUST PIPE

Homeowners are often puzzled why their clothes dryer takes longer to dry a load of clothes," Lipford noted.

The answer, he said, is pretty simple — but it has some serious implications.

A buildup of lint in the dryer or its vent pipe could not only reduce the efficiency of the dryer, but it could also be a fire hazard.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission found that in just one year 15,000 fires were attributed to the buildup of lint in the dryers or exhaust vents.

This buildup reduces airflow, causing the dryer to work harder and heat up excessively, which can lead to a fire.

There are two things you can do to stop this buildup.

■ Clean out the dryer's vent pipe periodically. There are brushes designed specifically for this job.

■ Clear the dryer's lint screen every time you use it.

"With just a little bit of work, you can get big peace of mind," Lipford said.

LUBRICATE HINGES

Lubricate exterior hinges, gates, garage door tracks and locks. "Any moving part in your home needs to be lubricated to function efficiently this spring," Lipford said.

Fixing a door lock that doesn't turn easily isn't rocket science, he said.



Special to The Prairie Press

Homeowners that don't want to remove rust by grinding or scraping can use the vinegar and salt method works best for tools with large areas of rust. This method also gets to rust you might not be able to reach with an abrasive.

■ Squirt a little powdered graphite (available in squeeze tubes at home improvement and automotive stores) in the keyhole of the lock.

■ Insert the key in the lock and turn it several times to distribute the graphite.

In a pinch you can rub lead from a soft pencil — which is composed of graphite — on the key, then work it back and forth in the lock. Be sure the lead in the pencil is made from true graphite, Lipford emphasized.

SHARPEN GARDEN TOOLS

As the weather improves and sunshine warms the earth, Lipford reminded homeowners to sharpen gardening tools and inspect your wheelbarrow.

"Doing this now will spare you the headache of doing it later in the season when you'll be using them more often," he said.

Properly maintained quality garden tools are a joy to use and can last for generations. And, like most things, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Regularly cleaning and oiling your garden tools will prevent rust, keep them sharper and allow the handles to stay strong.

"But if you're like me, sometimes you're not as diligent as you should be — putting your tools away dirty or leaving them outside in the weather," Lipford said. "Before you know it, they're on the fast track to the trash bin."

Here's how to get a shovel, or other garden tools, in shape and keep them that way.

To clean and maintain your tools, you'll need to gather supplies. These include Detergent, garden hose, sprayer, sponge, old rags or towels, steel wool, scrub brush, wire brush and a rotary wire brush attachment for your drill, sandpaper: (80 and 120 grit) that's made to work on both wood and metal, a fine metal file and a sharpening stone to hone edges, lubricating oil such as boiled linseed oil, tung oil, motor oil, lamp oil, or cooking oil.

Lipford emphasized the importance of taking steps to make sure you don't suffer an injury. That means wearing gloves, eye protection and a dust mask when working on tools.

Step 1: Clean Tools

Start by giving your tools a good scrubbing to remove any mud and grit from the blades and handles. Dry with old towels, then set them aside overnight so they dry completely to avoid trapping moisture.

Step 2: Remove Rust

Use steel wool or a wire brush to scrub away any rust that has accumulated on metal parts. A rotary wire brush attachment chucked in a drill can make the job easier. As a rule, you want to remove the rust with as little grinding and scraping of the steel as possible to keep tools from becoming thinner and weaker over time.

Step 3: Sand Tools

Smooth worn wooden handles with medium grit sandpaper to remove splinters and deteriorated finish. You can also use sandpaper to remove any remaining rust from surfaces and crevices and to lightly polish the metal. When finished, thoroughly wipe down the tools to remove any wood or metal sanding dust.

Step 4: Sharpen Tools

Use a metal file to lightly sharpen the edges of tools. Again, you don't want to grind away too much of the metal, just use it to smooth out nicks, remove burrs, and give a nice clean edge. On some cutting tools (like hedge clippers and axes), you'll need to follow up with a sharpening stone lubricated with oil for a finer edge.

Step 5: Oil Tools

Using a clean rag, apply lubricating oil to both the wooden handle and the metal blade. Rub the oil into the surface then wipe off any excess. The oil will help prevent rust and condition the wood to keep it from absorbing water and prevent cracking. After the handle has dried, apply a second coat of oil to the wood if needed. Tools with fiberglass or composite handles will only need a good cleaning.

Lipford noted some gardeners prefer to sand wooden tool handles and reapply a coat of exterior finish such as spar varnish.

"If you do refinish your tool handles, make sure the wood is completely dry first," he said. "I prefer using oil simply because I'd rather do a quick wipe down, rather than taking the time to sand the wood, apply finish and wait for it to dry, but it's really a matter of preference."

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Now that your gardening tools look like new, take the time to keep them that way. A few minutes to clean and wipe down tools prevents problems with your tools later, he said.

■ Rinse off mud and soil with a garden hose. Clinging wet soil is the main cause of rust on garden tools.

■ Scrub away stubborn soil with a scrub brush, and use paint thinner to remove sap and pitch.

■ Wipe tools dry with a rag or towel, or let them dry in the sun while you finish your chores.

■ Hang tools up rather than standing them on their edges.

■ Periodically wipe on a light coat of oil or spray surfaces with a penetrating oil. You can also put tools in a sand bucket to keep them clean and sharp.

Strong, stylish Spring home upgrades

SPECIAL TO THE PRAIRIE PRESS
www.familyfeatures.com

Springtime is a perfect opportunity for homeowners to begin planning renovations to enhance the interior and exterior of their living space. Because of its strong performance capabilities, low maintenance and design flexibility, brick is a popular building material choice when looking to improve or refresh your home in time for warm-weather hosting season.

Often selected for its functional benefits, brick is available in a wide array of colors, textures and sizes that can match varying design styles, from modern to traditional and almost everything between. If you're considering adding brick to your home's aesthetic, consider these five projects to tackle this spring from the experts at Glen-Gery, one of the largest brick and stone manufacturers in North America.

Basement or patio bar – As homeowners spend more time at home, they often look to maximize livable space. One way to take advantage of unused living space is building a basement or patio bar, which provides an area for

entertaining. Using an exposed brick wall can help designate the bar area and separate it from the rest of the basement, or lining a bar counter with brick can create a rustic contrast against the bar's seating.

Fireplace – To change the look and feel of a room almost instantly, you can use brick to give a fireplace a facelift or make it a focal point of your home. Available in a variety of colors and textures, Glen-Gery's diverse, premium portfolio of more than 600 brick and stone products can elevate your living room's style in a big way and create a more inviting area to share with family and friends. An outdoor fireplace is another option for extending livable space in a cozy way that can be used throughout the year.

Accent wall – Create a statement in or outside your home with a brick accent wall. Accent walls can help bring color, texture and beauty to homes by breaking up the monotony of monochromatic color or decor, creating visual interest and dimension. While brick in a running bond pattern is expected, you can spice up rooms with an unexpected bond pattern

like a stacked bond for modern appeal or herringbone for a rustic look.

Kitchen backsplash – One of the most overlooked areas of kitchen design is the backsplash. While its job is to protect your kitchen walls from the never-ending assault of kitchen splatters, there's no reason it can't look good, too. Brick backsplashes can accommodate most home designs and styles thanks to the versatility of shapes, colors, finishes and sizes available.

Black or white glazed brick works well with more modern kitchens while irregular brick containing an abundance of texture and a messy mortar application can complete rustic

farmhouse kitchens. An option like Glen-Gery's virtual design tool, Picture Perfect, can help you visualize projects in your home to see what fits your style and needs.

Brick skirt – For added curb appeal, consider adding a brick skirt around the foundation of your home. Given its resilient, durable and energy-efficient qualities, brick can help provide better insulation and protection while also adding visual appeal to the exterior of your home through texture, color and contrast. The skirting can also continue through to the front porch floor and steps, helping balance out the elevation of your home.

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Special to The Prairie Press

One way to change the look of your home is to use brick to give your fireplace an upgrade and make it a focal point of a room. There are a variety of colors and styles available in brick and stone. An outdoor fireplace is another way to extend living space for a home.

7 Garden growing basics for beginners

SPECIAL TO THE PRAIRIE PRESS
www.familyfeatures.com

Growing your own produce is an all-around smart practice, from the money you'll save at the grocery store to the contributions you can make toward a cleaner planet.

Maintaining a garden takes some effort, but it's a project even a beginner can tackle with ease. Consider these tips to start growing your at-home garden:

Select a perfect spot. You'll want to place your garden in an area where you see it often so you're reminded to weed and care for it regularly. Find a flat area you can access easily, where erosion and other pitfalls (including hungry wildlife) won't be a problem.

Choose between ground and containers. There are pros and cons to gardening in containers vs. the ground, and there's no universal right choice. Rather, the best garden depends on your goals and preferences. A ground garden usually offers more space and may provide a better growth environment for roots. However, a container garden is often easier to maintain and may be all you need if you wish to grow just a few plants.

Understand the importance of quality soil. You may think any dirt will do, but keep in mind the soil you plant in will be the primary source of nutrients for your produce. Not only that, but quality soil provides stability so plants can root firmly and grow healthy



Special to The Prairie Press

Gardening can be rewarding both physically and mentally.

and sturdy to support their bounty. Quality soil also allows for ample drainage. Organic matter like compost, leaf mold or aged manure all help improve soil quality.

Keep water close. Lugging water can quickly eliminate the pleasure of tending your garden, so be sure you're situated near a hose. You'll know it's time to water when the soil is dry about an inch below the surface.

Plan for plenty of sun. A bright, sunny spot is a must, since most vegetables, herbs and fruits depend on six or more hours of sun every day. Remember the sun's path changes throughout the year, and as trees and foliage grow, they may produce more shade with each growing season.

Consider what you'll grow. Starting with veggies you know you like is a smart start-

ing point since you'll be pouring sweat equity into making them grow. Over time, you

might add new varieties, but early on, keep your focus on foods you know you like so you can see a meaningful return and avoid waste. You'll also need to consider what you can grow to maturity within your area's growing season. If necessary, you might want to start transplants you can nurture indoors before moving them outside when the temperatures allow.

Plant according to a calendar. Knowing how long it takes different foods to mature will help you create a planting calendar. You don't want to harvest everything at once, and if you stagger planting and replant what you can, you'll have a garden that produces food for your family for a longer period of time.

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A shamrock-shaped solution for lawns

SPECIAL TO THE PRAIRIE PRESS
www.familyfeatures.com

Miniclover is drought-tolerant, simple, stunning and sustainable with low-to-no maintenance

That lush, green lawn most strive for is struggling to survive as our climate experiences “weather whiplash,” meaning abrupt swings in weather conditions from one extreme to another.

Last season, drought conditions were so dire in California billboards shouted, “Brown is the New Green.” This season, despite early, extreme flooding in California, evidence suggests the length and depth of droughts will increase in upcoming years, becoming more frequent and severe.

Outdoor water usage is still astronomical, synthetic chemical use is ever-present and fuel-guzzling lawn blowers and mowers sing all summer. Traditional lawn maintenance is expensive, unnatural, untenable and increases greenhouse gasses, wastes water, pollutes ecosystems and reduces biodiversity.

Average American families use 320 gallons of water daily, about 30% outdoors, with more than half devoted to watering lawns and gardens, according to the EPA. Nationwide, landscape irrigation is estimated at almost one-third of all residential water usage, totaling nearly 9 billion gallons daily.

Gas-powered lawn mowers spew pollutants that can cause planet-warming gases, contributing to climate crisis and drought. According to the EPA, gas-powered lawn



equipment releases more than 22 million tons of CO2 emissions and estimates over 17 million gallons of gasoline are spilled refueling lawn equipment; that’s more than all oil spilled by Exxon Valdez.

There are many issues causing harm to environmental health, from the ridiculous, like billionaires taking 17-minute flights in private jets, producing 2 tons of CO2 emissions, to everyday lawn care wasting staggering amounts of water for aesthetics while polluting the environment through run-off and toxic emissions.

Cash rebates, up to \$5,000, are being offered to some for the removal of grass lawns. To get the rebate, other water-efficient options must be put in place. It’s time to take a page from the past; sowing clover seed can create a great-looking, water-efficient, sustainable lawn. Decades ago, clover was stan-

dard in lawn seed mixes. Then agricultural chemical companies created herbicides to rid lawns of broadleaf plants, killing everything but grass, clovers included, branding them weeds.

“Today, clover is making a comeback,” said Troy Hake, president and owner of Outsidepride.com, offering drought-tolerant grasses, clovers, wildflower seeds and more. “Tik Tok’s #cloverlawn has over 65 million views, evidencing it’s time for sustainable options, like adding ‘miniclover’ or replacing lawns with it. Miniclover (trifolium repens), is one-third to half the size of white Dutch clover, only grows 4-6 inches and produces a thick, carpet-like look that blends well with turf. Less expensive than grass seed, it’s a natural solution for self-sustaining, low-maintenance lawns that look beautiful and help eliminate the need for fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and weekly mowing. It’s healthier for people, pets, soil and waterways. You can’t go wrong with it.”

There’s nothing you can do about those 17-minute private jet flights. However, anyone with a lawn can add-in miniclover and redefine what sustainable lawns and responsible lawn care looks like. Sales of miniclover rose dramatically last season, surely an indicator that this lawn renovation trend was well-received and continues to grow.

BENEFITS

- Nitrogen fixer. Miniclover takes nitro-

gen from the air and “fixes” it in soil, eliminating the need to apply nitrogen, keeping lawns green and growing while adding natural nitrogen to surrounding soil.

- Drought tolerant. Miniclover is drought-tolerant and can stay green all summer with minimal watering.

- Deters bugs. Grubs that feed on grass roots will not eat miniclover, and adult beetles and bugs are deterred from laying eggs in it.

- Crowds out weeds. Miniclover is evenly dispersed via stolons (stems grow horizontally along the ground), crowding out weeds, preventing new weeds and controlling erosion.

- Low-to-no maintenance. You can mow miniclover – the more it’s cut, the smaller the leaf size – or let it grow. Miniclover only blooms once in summer, providing bees with nectar, or mowing will prevent blooming.

- Thrives in sun to partial shade. Miniclover does well in partial shade that receives some direct sunshine daily.

- Stands up to soil and subsoil compaction.

- Immune to “dog patches.” Dog urine discolors lawns, but miniclover stays green and lush.

- Feels soft and springy on bare feet and looks like ordered whimsy.

So... what’s not to like?

For other drought-tolerant options, visit Outsidepride.com.

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6 ways to keep your pets happy, healthy in spring

SPECIAL TO THE PRAIRIE PRESS
www.familyfeatures.com

Warmer weather means it's time to spring clean, get grooming and prepare your pets' diets to support them through the season.

Keep your furry friends happy and healthy this spring with these six tips from the experts at Zesty Paws, an award-winning pet supplement brand.

GIVE SKIN AND COATS A LITTLE TLC

Many pets form winter coats during the colder months to help them stay warm and comfortable then shed the coats in the spring to prepare for warmer temperatures. Some pets may need extra help maintaining their shiny, healthy coats, especially if mats have formed in their fur or if they are breeds that develop a thick undercoat. Professional grooming, at-home brushing and regular bathing can all be helpful ways to speed up the process to remove some of the extra fur and decrease the prevalence of dander, dust and pollen that can attach to fur and skin through the season.

ADD SEASONAL ALLERGY SUPPORT

Just like humans, furry friends can develop and experience seasonal allergies, too. Giving your pets' immune systems some extra support can help ease some common allergy symptoms. Supplements like Zesty Paws Aller-Immune Bites for Cats and Aller-Immune Bites for Dogs are chewables that provide seasonal allergy support by aiding normal immune functions, skin health and gut flora, and may also help maintain normal histamine levels.

EASE BACK INTO EXERCISE

The change in weather means more time for outdoor adventures with your pets, but don't forget to cool down and warm up as you and your pets ease back into the season. Planning for short, leashed walks and timed play sessions can help your pets gradually prepare their hips and joints for fun, warm weather activities.

WATCH OUT FOR PET PESTS

Once temperatures start to rise, the tiny, creepy critters start crawling. Fleas, ticks and other pests can cause serious health concerns for pets. This spring, make sure your pest control programs are primed and ready for added protection. Talk to your veterinarian about the best routine and products for



Special to The Prairie Press

Adding a supplement to your cat or dog's diet will provide them seasonal allergy support.

your pets.

FRESHEN UP BEDDING AND BOWLS

It's important to keep a clean environment by scrubbing, sweeping and vacuuming regularly to decrease allergens in the home. When you're tackling this year's spring cleaning, remember to put your pets' bedding and bowls on the list, too. Updating or disinfecting your pets' blankets, litter boxes, toys and other supplies is a good way to keep them feeling safe and comfortable in the home.

SCHEDULE AN ANNUAL VET VISIT

Spring is a good time to schedule your pets' annual vet visits. Make sure they're up to date on all vaccinations, get their dental health checkups and re-evaluate nutrition plans.

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