



Joanne Gardiner

Broker 00822285 & SP1178511
Advantage Realty

3205 WHIPPLE RD
UNION CITY, CA 94587
Phone: 510-429-4800
joanne@joannegardiner.com
3205 Whipple Road

Spring into Your March Home Maintenance

by *homewarranty.com*

We've all heard the old proverb: "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." It's a perfect description of this month's temperamental weather. There may be a chill in the air now, but we know warmer days will soon be here. Spring into your March home maintenance with our 5 homeowner "to-dos" for March.

1. Clean the Patio Furniture

If your outdoor furniture has spent the winter in the elements, it's probably looking grimy. Scrub down your chairs and tables with soap and water before you begin using them this spring. No one wants to sit on a dirty cushion. Throw your washable cushions or cushion covers into the laundry. If the cushions are worn or damaged, now is the perfect time to replace them.

2. Tune-up the Garden Tools

This includes your lawnmower. Don't start the summer with dull blades. Make time this weekend to take your mower and clippers in for a good sharpening and tune-up.

3. Plant a Tree

Spring and fall are the best times to plant a tree. Cool temps and wet weather are ideal conditions for root systems to get established. Ask your local nursery which species will do best in your microclimate. Also, get planting instructions. How deep should your planting hole be, and how wide? If your area is prone to late frost, you may want to put this task off another month. Don't risk freezing your newly planted sapling.

Remember, plant your tree a safe distance from your home's exterior to prevent its root system from expanding beneath your home's foundation.

4. Check the Foundation

Look for signs of cracks or movement in concrete slabs. This includes flaking or chipped concrete. Remember, exterior slabs should drain away from your home's foundation. Keep an eye out for pools of water near your home's foundation that won't drain properly. Moisture near the foundation of your home can cause the soil to expand. Expanding soil can put pressure on your home's foundation and may cause your home to shift over time.

5. Clean Out the Gutters

Clear debris from gutters before spring rains and melting snow overload them. Your gutter system should drain water safely away from the foundation of your home. Too often we see downspouts directing water into pools that sit near a home's foundation. Hire a professional to clean your gutters depending on how comfortable you are on a ladder. If you feel capable of tackling the task, read our article *Clean Your Gutters Like a Boss* at *homewarranty.com* before heading up your ladder.

Enjoy the fickle weather this month. With our 5 Homeowner To-Dos for March, you can set aside a weekend to busy yourself with these important tasks. However, since this is March we're talking about, you may find yourself stuck inside during a weekend rain storm. If so, we offer our rainy weekend "to-do" list: Couch, movie, popcorn...repeat.

March Calendar

March 8 - Daylight Saving Time Begins

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

March 19 - First Day of Spring

March is American Red Cross Month

Homeowner Tip:



Make a Plan and Get Prepared

March is American Red Cross Month. What a great time for your family to establish a meeting place outside your home should a community disaster or emergency occur. Make sure everyone in the family knows how to contact each other if you get separated. Establish an out-of-area contact (a friend) you can use to communicate with.

A Wee Bit of Knowledge for St. Patrick's Day

1. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. As a missionary, he is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland in the 5th century.
2. His real name was Maewyn Succat.
3. St. Patrick was not Irish. He was born to Roman parents in Scotland or Wales.
4. St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17th in observance of his death.
5. St. Patrick used the shamrock as a metaphor for the Holy Trinity while on the job in Ireland.
6. Although credited for driving snakes out of Ireland, the country was never home to snakes.
7. Irish immigrants began observing St. Patrick's Day in Boston in 1737.
8. The first St. Patrick's Day parade in America was held in New York City in 1766.
9. The color green is worn to make one invisible to leprechauns - who tend to pinch anyone they can see.
8. The odds of finding a 4-leaf clover are 1 in 10,000.



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March is National Berries and Cherries Month - Celebrate with a Triple Berry Cobbler

Ingredients:

- 2 c. blackberries
- 2 c. blueberries
- 2 c. raspberries
- 3/4 c. Plus 2 Tbsp. Sugar
- 2 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- Kosher salt
- 1 1/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 Stick cold butter, cut into cubes
- 2/3 c. heavy cream, more for brushing

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 375°.
- In a large bowl, toss all berries with 3/4 cup sugar, cornstarch, lemon juice, and lemon zest. Season with a pinch of salt.
- In another large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, lemon zest and salt. Add butter and break down into pea-sized pieces with your fingers or two forks. Gradually stir in the heavy cream and mix until a dough forms.
- Pour the berry mixture into your baking dish.
- Using a large spoon or an ice cream scoop, drop dough over fruit. Brush with cream and sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons sugar.
- Bake until the fruit is bubbling and the biscuits are golden brown, 47 to 50 minutes. Serve.



Photo & recipe courtesy of delish.com