



Joanne L. Gardiner

**Broker**

**00822285**

**Advantage Realty**

3205 WHIPPLE RD

UNION CITY, CA 94587

Phone: 510-589-4794

joanne@joannegardiner.com

CaliforniaSunshineHomes.com

## Get Ready for a Relaxing Thanksgiving Day

by [homewarranty.com](http://homewarranty.com)

We've all heard the motto of the Boy Scouts: "Be Prepared." When its founder was asked "for what?", his answer was simple, "Why, for any old thing." We will assume this includes a house full of Thanksgiving guests.

### Check Your Oven's Temperature

If you are worried about your oven not properly heating, you can quickly check it yourself. Buy an oven thermometer and place it in the oven. Set the oven thermostat to 350 degrees F. The oven should heat to between 325 degrees and 375 degrees. In most cases, it is considered acceptable if the actual temperature is within 25 degrees of the set temperature. It is often possible to adjust the thermostat knob or to recalibrate the electronic range control if the oven is not reaching the right temperature.

### Clean the Dishwasher Filter

Filters protect the pump and motor seals. Many dishwashers have a filter located under the spray arm, near the bottom of the appliance. The filter can get clogged with sediment from hard water, food residue, or even detergent build-up. It is important to check the condition of the filter to make sure it is intact, has no holes in the screen, and is free of debris.

### Prepare Your Kitchen

A week before Thanksgiving is a great time to make sure your dishes, serving platters, glasses, coffee cups, etc., are cleaned and ready for your table. Wash tablecloths and napkins if necessary. Use sticky notes to plan what dish will be going onto what platter.

### Tidy Up and Decorate

Thanksgiving is an occasion, so welcome your guests with a little autumnal flair. Hang a harvest wreath on your front door or display pumpkins indoors or out.

- Focus on cleaning only the parts of your house your guests will be using. This is no time to be "deep cleaning" the place. You have enough on your plate to think about.

- Clear space in the entryway closet for guests' coats and belongings.

- Clean the bathrooms, including mirrors, and stock the bathroom with extra toilet paper. Provide clean hand towels.

- Spruce up the yard. Rake the leaves the day before your guests arrive, and if time allows, plant some fall flowers.

Perhaps the Boy Scouts weren't readying themselves for Thanksgiving guests, but the idea is the same. A little prepping can help you find time to enjoy the good food and people who have gathered in your home to spend a special day with you.

## November Calendar

11/5 - Daylight Saving Time

11/11 - Veterans Day

11/23 - Thanksgiving Day

## Homeowner Tips



### Don't Overload Your Dishwasher

Most of us don't enjoy being overly crowded, and neither do your dishes. Overloading your dishwasher can cause your dishes to rattle against other dishes and create scratches and even stress fractures. An overloaded dishwasher also disrupts the water and detergent flow, which results in less-than-spotless dishes and glasses.

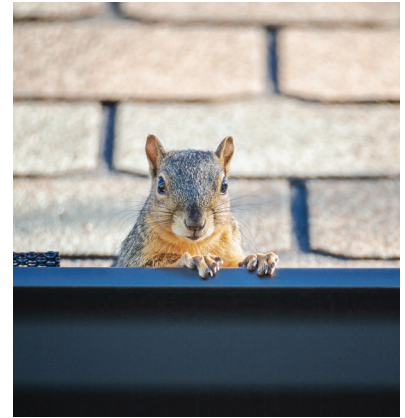
## Three Important Fall Home Maintenance Check-ups

Experts recommend the following tasks be tackled around your home every year. They are a great way to prevent costly repairs down the road.

**1. Clean your gutters** - Gutters will more likely rust and get damaged when they're clogged. Make sure your roof's drainage system is free of leaves, sticks, and other debris in order to keep your gutters flowing free all season. Check to make sure water is properly diverted by your gutter and downspouts away from your home's foundation.

**2. Inspect your roof** - Homeowners everywhere can attest to the problems a leaky roof will create. Use binoculars to inspect your roof and check for damaged or missing shingles. If you notice a large accumulation of roofing granules in your gutter, it's a sign that your roof is losing its coating.

**3. Give your furnace a checkup** - You're going to want your heater working properly when temperatures begin to drop. Experts suggest having your heating system inspected by a professional, before the cold weather arrives.



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## Pumpkin Squares - A Holiday Favorite Sweet Treat

### Ingredients

- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon salt

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan.

Mix pumpkin, sugar, oil, and eggs together in a mixing bowl until smooth.

Sift flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, and salt together in a separate bowl. Stir flour mixture into the pumpkin mixture until well combined. Spread evenly into the prepared pan.

Bake until top springs back when lightly pressed, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool completely before cutting into 24 squares.

Top with cream cheese frosting or a sweet glaze for a little extra decadence.



*Photo and recipe courtesy of:  
allrecipes.com*