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Better Home Living™

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Give That Mower a New Lease on Life

If your lawn mower is a couple of years old and not running as it did when it was new, don't give up on it yet.

The average life span of a mower in the U.S. is just three years. If an owner takes care of a mower, however, it can last far longer. Here's how to start:

Change the spark plug. Plugs can erode, but replacing one will ensure a quick start.

Then get the blade sharpened. To remove it, always start by removing the spark plug. Usually the blade is held by only one bolt. Sharp blades make grass look nice and reduce engine strain.

Lubricate all the moving parts with a silicone spray. Spread a little oil on the wheels where they turn at the axle, and on any moving parts on the handle.

If the mower has carburetor problems, take it to a repair shop. For about \$100, they will take it apart and clean it out so it will last you another season or three.



I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

*Susan Duncan
Two Ladies & A Bucket*

Be Kind to Animals - Pets Suffer in Technological Age

It should not come as a surprise that animals are being ignored in favor of technology.

After all, human couples are ignoring each other for technology. A survey conducted in 2014 by Pennsylvania State University found that more than 60 percent of women said that technology interfered with time spent with their partner.

Humans are ignoring their own children in favor of technology. In a 2016 study by AVG Technologies, more than 50 percent of children reported that their parents were on the phone too much.

It's not a leap to guess that pets are missing a ton of eye contact, belly rubs, and attentive walks -- all because of smartphones.

Maybe the pets are fighting back.

According to Square Trade, smartphones are regularly a target of dogs. About 28 million people found their smartphones chewed on.

Jealousy might be the reason for the smartphone attacks since 25 percent of pet owners say they were using their smartphone at the time their pet damaged it.

Pets don't stop at smartphones, either. About 12 percent of all damaged tech devices were game controllers but the biggest damage was to power cords, at 41 percent.

If you are ignoring your pet for technology, you might find the pet becomes depressed. Symptoms include not eating, or weight gain, misbehaving, long nails, and sleeping all the time.

The remedy is simple. Get up and get out with your pet. Play a game. Take a walk. Give some joy.

Did You Know? Nearly All Countries Have Some Sort of Mother's Day

It has been said in song that the word 'mother' is so precious that it sounds the same in every language.

If that is true, it shouldn't be a surprise that mothers throughout the world have a special day.

In the United States and Canada, Mother's Day is always the second Sunday in May. In the U.S. Mother's Day was officially established in 1914.

Around the world, the dates may be different but the celebration is roughly the same: Cards, flowers or maybe chocolates for mom.

France established their holiday for mothers in 1950 and is generally on the fourth Sunday in May.

In the UK, mothers were honored as early as the 16th century on the fourth Sunday of Lent, called Mothering Sunday.

The mariachi sounds of Las Mananitas are heard in Mexico every May 10 to celebrate mom.

In India and Japan, Mother's Day is the second Sunday in May.

In Egypt and some other Arab countries, mothers are honored on the first day of spring, according to Time.



Do You Know...

... someone that could use our services?

Perhaps a friend, family member, co-worker, or someone from church?

When a new client signs up for regular cleaning services at your recommendation; you receive a special gift from me and our new client will receive a \$25.00 additional cleaning service for free!

If you think someone could use our services, then don't hesitate to call them and give them our name and phone number. Be sure to have them mention your name when they call so we can send your gift!



Thanks in advance for your help!

Movie Night...

Under the Stars...



August 11, 2017
6:30 pm – 10:00 pm

Visit our Facebook page for more information.

Credit Report Late Payments

Everyone misses a payment at one point or another. Maybe the debit card on file expired, or the bill was sent to the wrong address. Whatever the reason, missed payments can mean serious hits to a credit score. According to Equifax, just one missed payment could cause as much as a 110-point drop to a person with a score of 780 who has never had a record of missed payments. That is pretty steep for a simple mistake.

Luckily, The Simple Dollar points out that missing a payment does not actually start to matter until after 29 days have passed. Why? There is simply no method to report an account that has not yet reached 30 days past due. Therefore, people often say that missing one payment will not hurt anything. In reality, it is the report of one missed payment that does the damage.



Recipes to Use Up Home-grown Chicken Eggs

If you keep chickens, you'll end up with an abundance of eggs. You'll quickly learn recipes to use them up.

In these two recipes, we use yolks and whites separately.

Pasta Carbonara

- 1 pound spaghetti or linguini
- 3-4 slices bacon
- 2 teaspoon grated garlic
- Half cup white wine
- 3 large egg yolks

- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Grated Romano cheese
- Olive oil

Prepare pasta. Cut the bacon into small pieces and cook in a skillet with a little olive oil until browned. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes. Add the wine and let the alcohol cook off. In a small bowl, separate your eggs (reserve your whites for some meringue). Beat the yolks with a little bit of the water from the boiling pasta. This will keep you from getting scrambled eggs. After draining the pasta add it to the skillet with the bacon and oil. Stir to coat the pasta with the oil and bacon. Pour the egg mixture over the pasta and stir together so the pasta gets coated with the egg yolks. It should create a thick sauce texture. Turn the heat off the skillet and add Romano cheese and salt and pepper to taste.

Use your reserved egg whites to make this treat:

Chocolate Chip Meringue Cookies

- 3 egg whites
- 3/4 tablespoon vanilla
- 1/8tsp cream of tartar
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup miniature chocolate chips

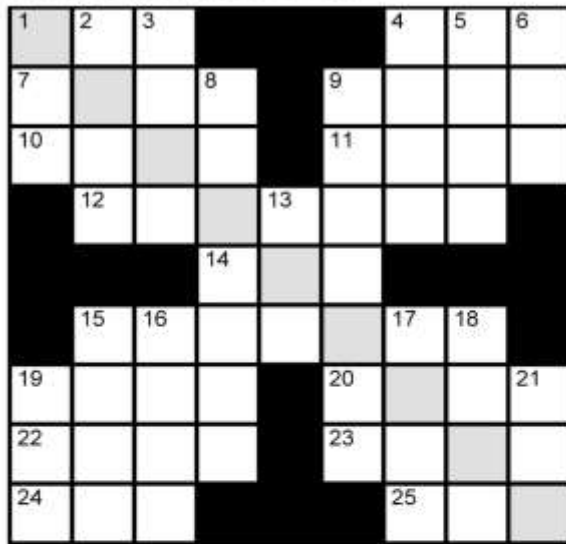
Grease a cookie sheet. With a mixer whip your egg whites, vanilla, and cream of tartar until you get soft peaks. Add the sugar a little at a time while the mixer continues until you have stiff peaks. You want the meringue stiff. Fold in the chocolate chips. Drop meringue onto cookie sheet by rounded tablespoon. Bake in a 300-degree oven until they are solid and lightly golden. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool



Famed Word Book

Across

1. "60 Minutes" network
 4. Madhouse
 7. Diamond Head locale
 9. Pickle flavoring
 10. Hobbled gait
 11. "National Velvet" author Bagnold
 12. Pipe filler
 14. Blunder
 15. Jubilation
 19. Leave in, as text
 20. Cut or paste, maybe
 22. Wood sorrels
 23. Utah lily
 24. Advanced deg. accented in music
 25. "Thar ___ blows!"
- ### Down
1. Machine tooth
 2. Lure
 3. Jerk
 4. Brass component
 5. Melange
 6. Elderly
 8. They're not
 9. Criticizes openly
 13. Actor Carney
 15. Carve in stone
 16. Detective's need
 17. Keats creations
 18. Approaching
 19. Soak (up)
 21. Foot part



The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

Trivia Teaser – Burn Notice

1. Which TV western opened every week with the burning of a map?
a-"Bonanza," b-"Laredo," c-"The Virginian," d-"The Big Valley."

2. For which film did George Burns win an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor? a-"Oh God," b-"The Sunshine Boys," c-"18 Again," d-"Going in Style."

3. Which city was burned by the Great Fire of 1666? a-Prague, b-Chicago, c-London, d-St. Petersburg.

4. An anthropomorphic fireball named Burnie is the mascot of which NBA team? a-Miami Heat, b-Cleveland Cavaliers, c-Orlando Magic, d-Washington Wizards.

5. "Burning Down the House" was the first top ten single for which rock band? a-The Ramones, b-Television, c-Blondie, d-Talking Heads.

6. The Black Rock Desert, a dried lake bed, is the site of the annual Burning Man festival held in which U.S. state? a-California, b-Utah, c-South Dakota, d-Nevada.

7. In 2002, Donovan Patton replaced Steve Burns as the host of which kids' TV show? a-"Blue's Clues," b-"Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego," c-"Yo Gabba Gabba," d-"Gullah Gullah Island."

8. The writer Rodolfo burns his manuscript in an effort to stay warm in the opening act of which Puccini opera? a-"Tosca," b-"La Boheme," c-"Turandot," d-"Manon Lescault."

9. Edward Burns and Shannyn Sossamon starred in the 2008 remake of which 2004 Japanese horror film? a-"The Ring," b-"The Grudge," c-"Pulse," d-"One Missed Call."

10. Which Broadway musical ran for 964 performances in the 1960s starring David Burns, Jack Gilford, and Zero Mostel? a-"The Producers," b-"Camelot," c-"A Funny Thing Happened On The Way to the Forum," d-"Fiddler on the Roof."

Answers to Burn Notice
1-a, "Bonanza"
2-b, "The Sunshine Boys"
3-c, London
4-a, Miami Heat
5-d, Talking Heads
6-d, Nevada
7-a, "Blue's Clues"
8-b, "La Boheme"
9-d, "One Missed Call"
10-c, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum"

Plant Foods Can Provide Protein

Protein is essential for a healthy body and mind, but it doesn't have to come exclusively from meat, poultry or fish.

Many plant foods are good sources of protein, including beans, grains, nuts and seeds.

To calculate your protein needs, multiply .36 grams by your weight. Very active people may need .45 or .55 grams per pound to support muscle growth.

A good rule is to make sure 10 to 35 percent of daily calories are from protein.

Among the best sources of plant-based proteins are beans. Just a half cup of white, black, kidney or chickpeas give you 8-9 grams of protein. Lentils offer a full 9 grams per half cup.

Seeds and nuts are also very reliable sources. Peanuts, almonds, and pistachios offer 6-7 grams per ounce. Pumpkin seeds give 8 grams per ounce, and sunflower seeds give 5 grams per ounce.

Two tablespoons of peanut butter give you 8 grams of protein.

A good idea is to combine plant sources with small doses of poultry, eggs and grains.

The Women's Health Advisor recommends this menu to satisfy protein needs:

- 2 eggs.
- 3 ounces of chicken breast.
- 1/2 cup wild rice.
- 1 ounce of almonds or peanuts.

Another menu:

- 6 ounces Greek yogurt.
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter.
- 1/2 cup beans
- 1/2 cup pasta, whole wheat
- 1/2 cup tofu.



Two Ladies & A Bucket

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Save on Groceries By Planning Meals First

If you really want to cut your grocery expense in half -- or more -- don't make a shopping list until you plan your meals.

Money experts are in near unanimity about meal planning as a way to save on grocery costs.

The advantage of meal planning is that you buy just what you actually eat, cutting down on food waste and time spent figuring out every meal.

According to SimpleDollar.com, if you make a meal plan you'll find that you usually eat simply, even if you do like to fantasize about the fancy meals you see on Facebook.

Meal planning can allow for hurry-up meals and make room for more creative cooking. The key is: Plan first.

Use the weekly grocery flyer in your local newspaper to find deeply discounted items. The Simple Dollar recommends identifying three discounted items and planning six meals around them.

Using the discounted items as a base, plan your meals for a week.

How much can you save?

Writing in Simple Dollar, Holly Johnson says she feeds her family of four on \$150 per week by creating meal plans and shopping sales.

Here's how her grocery list roughly breaks down:

Produce: \$52, including fruits, lettuce, carrots, celery parsnips, cabbage squash, tomatoes.

Core Foods: \$51, including bread, eggs, milk, noodles, cereal, vegetable broth, juice, cheese, beans, peanut butter and soup.

Snacks: \$10, crackers and granola bars.

Drinks: \$14, beer, soda, tea.

Total: \$127.25.

Among the meals Johnson planned for the week: Vegetable soup, vegetable lasagna, egg sandwiches, spaghetti squash and sauce, grilled cheese and tomato soup.

Quick Cleaning Tip

Have you ever cleaned the inside of your car, only to be frustrated by the air vents that you just can't quite get into all the little spaces? Here's the trick. Go to any craft store and pick up a sponge paint brush. Depending on how dusty the vents are, use the 'brush' wet or dry. Problem solved!



What to Eat Before a Workout

The closer to your workout, the less you should eat, according to Jennifer Sacke, associate professor at the Friedman School.

Good rules to follow:

- 30 minutes before exercise, choose a 50 to 100 calorie carbohydrate snack such as a cup of fresh fruit, a snack box of raisins or a cup of applesauce.

- 1 hour before exercise, add another 100 calories with 6 ounces of low-fat plain yogurt or a light string cheese snack.

- 2 or more hours, add another 100 calories. You could choose a half cup or crunchy cold cereal, a small banana or a 2-3 ounce pull-top can of tuna.

Need Some Extra Help?

Doesn't it seem like every time you turn around you find something else around the house that needs to be cleaned? Call us today and ask us about rates for additional services like oven and refrigerator cleaning. Don't forget those windows. We will be happy to help you.

When your mother asks, "Do you want a piece of advice?" it's a mere formality. It doesn't matter if you answer yes or no. You're going to get it anyway. ~Erma Bombeck

Do Your Part to Limit Mosquito's This Summer

Between the mild winter that we experienced this year and the recent flooding, bugs are most likely going to be a real nuisance this summer. There are a few things that you can do to help limit mosquitos around your house this summer.



1. Tip over any unused buckets, pools, containers in your yard to drain water. This includes water bowls for your pets. Mosquitos require very little water for breeding.
2. Toss any unneeded items from your yard like old tires. If you have one as a swing – bore a hole in the bottom for drainage.
3. Keep gutters cleaned out so water drains freely.
4. Tie any tarps down securely so that water does not pool on them.
5. Treat your yard with a good quality insect repellent.