

Newton Inspections, Inc.

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Gravitate to Newton!

Looking Out for You and Your Home - by Rick Newton

April, 2008

April Showers Bring ...

Yes, they bring the eventual May flowers, but the month of April also brings other challenges for the average homeowner in northern Illinois. For what is likely the first time in 3-4 months, we will stick our heads outside in anxious anticipation of sunshine, short sleeves, and outdoor relaxation! But before we get too relaxed, the old homestead is going to require some examination to see how it fared over the seemingly endless winter. Here are some suggestions for what you should examine:

- Check your gutters and downspouts. Just like you did in preparing for winter, examine your downspouts for any blockage. April showers will do it for you if you don't get to the blockage soon enough and could lead to damaging runoff from the outside edge of the gutters - both to the fascia and objects below. Also check the gutters for any debris that may have accumulated over the winter. Be certain to check that the gutter support hardware is providing proper support - the weight of winter's snow and ice can take its toll on gutters.
- Check wooden siding. Other forms of siding (metal, vinyl, etc.) may require cleaning, but it is particularly important for wood if there is a presence of mold growth. April showers will not wash away any existing mold - rather, they will provide moisture (one of the main ingredients required for mold in addition to organic material and proper temperature) for growth.
- Check the roof. Look for any signs of loose, broken, or missing shingles. If you find any of these conditions, consult with a qualified roofing contractor to perform the required maintenance.
- Examine the underside of your roof in the attic. Check for any signs of active leakage and/or moisture stains on the roof sheathing (usually plywood or OSB) and the rafters/trusses. Check around any locations where holes were intentionally cut in the roof (chimney, roof vents, plumbing vents, radon vents, skylights, etc.). Again, if you find any evidence of leakage, consult with a qualified roofing contractor. If, however, you find any semblance of what appears to be mold in this examination, contact a qualified mold inspector.
- While you are in the attic, use this opportunity to also check the following:
 - Any ventilation pipe for bathroom exhaust fans should terminate as close to a roof or soffit vent as possible. Check to make sure no mold has formed on the underside of the roof in the area above which the exhaust fan pipe terminates.
 - Check for any insect hives/nests (bees, wasps, etc.). These should be removed if found. I recommend having them removed by a qualified professional. Also have the professional find the incoming location(s) for the insects and properly seal them.
- Check exterior caulking (siding, doorways, windows, etc.). If you didn't get to it in the fall and/or the winter undid your earlier attempts to provide proper sealing, now is a good time to do it. Be sure to clean surrounding surfaces and to remove old caulk.



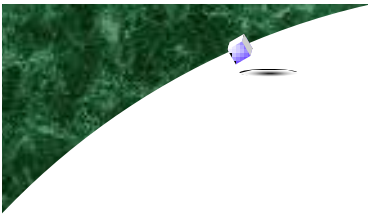
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April 2008

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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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27	28	29	30			

April Highlights!

- Apr. 1 - April Fool's Day
- Apr. 9 - Winston Churchill Day
- Apr. 10 - Golfer's Day
- Apr. 11 - Jackie Robinson Day
- Apr. 15 - IRS Gotcha Day
- Apr. 15 - 1st McDonalds Opens, 1955
- Apr. 17 - Daffy Duck's Birthday - 71
- Apr. 18 - Paul Revere Day
- Apr. 20-26 National Karaoke Week
- Apr. 22 - National Jelly Bean Day
- Apr. 25 - Meadowlark Lemon's Birthday - 75
- Apr. 27 - Babe Ruth Day
- Apr. 30 - Take a Bartlett Silver Hawk to Lunch Day

Spring Lawn Care

The snow is finally (we hope) gone and now you take that first leisurely stroll to check out your yard and see how it survived the winter - and what to our wondering eyes should appear but dozens of brown spots in the lawn - compliments of Fido!

As you are assessing your overall lawn maintenance needs for the spring, any spots caused by your dear pets or salt may require special attention in conditioning the soil before any new seed planting is performed. A website to check out relative to these types of spots is www.bringbackthe.green.com.

If fertilizing efforts in past years have had questionable results, you may want to consider having your soil tested to determine the composition of your soil before performing any application of lawn care products - this may cause you to alter or supplement the type of fertilizers, crabgrass preventatives, insect control compounds, etc. that you apply.



What brown spots? Who, us?

Application of the lawn care products is generally performed with a mechanical spreader - either the drop or broadcast variety. Because drop spreaders have a very linear and limited path in which they spread a product, preventing "stripes" in the lawn can be a challenge. Broadcast spreaders are less likely to cause that problem. Some lawn care experts also recommend applying a product twice - using 1/2 of the recommended amount in each application. The second application is then applied at a right angle to the first application.

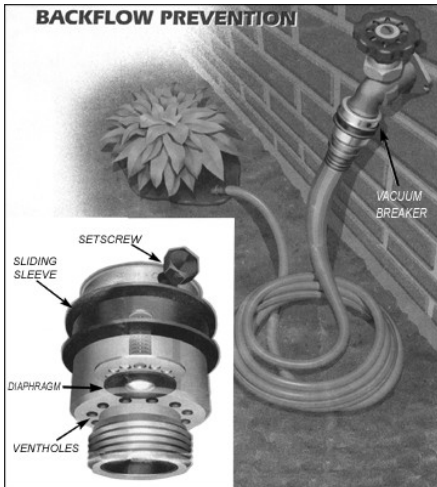
In addition to proper feeding of your outdoor "carpet", watering is also critical. A rule of thumb in this part of the country is approximately 1" of water per week. That's generally not an issue in spring, but the summer months generally have their challenges with adequate precipitation. Watering in the wee hours of the morning is generally preferable to watering during the hottest or late hours of the day.

Always read the application directions for lawn care products carefully and, assuming you have the proper chemical composition for your particular lawn/soil, be certain to use the recommended amount for application. And for Fido's well being, be sure to pay close attention to instructions about when it safe for pet access.

Safety Precautions for Outdoor Faucets

Exterior faucets provide multiple conveniences for a homeowner, whether they are watering lawns, washing windows, spraying weeds, or washing the car. One aspect of exterior water supply that is more common than in the house is the use of a hose to distribute the water. If not properly protected, the use of a hose can be a considerable safety hazard to residents in the home. If, for example, a hose was left to rest in a bucket of soapy, dirty water being used to wash a car, through siphoning action, it is possible that the water in the bucket could be introduced to the potable water in

the home and used to satisfy the needs of the current user(s) - whether they are showering, brushing their teeth, getting a drink, doing laundry, etc.



Backflow Preventer/Vacuum Breaker

The good news is that there is a very simple solution known as a backflow preventer or vacuum breaker that can be simply attached to the faucet to prevent this from happening. Most new home building codes require backflow prevention, but there are millions of homes for which that protection is not afforded. Be sure that yours is not one of those!

Make It Your Business to Know!

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As a trusted American Family agent, I do my best to provide my clients with the proper coverage at the lowest prices. I'm very confident in my services, and I always tell it like it is. There is never any pressure coming from my agency unless I see that your family is underinsured in any specific area, and I advise you to better protect your family's assets. Just remember that my advice, recommendations, and my time are always free; so are the quotes.

So do not be shy to give me a call for your free evaluation.

- I've been an American Family agent for over 2 years.
- Bartlett resident for over 24 years.
- Graduated with a degree in finance from the University Of Iowa.
- Played baseball for over 13 years.
 - Bartlett Hawks Baseball
 - Elgin Comm. College Spartans Baseball

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Newton Newsletter

Q&A - Right Back Atcha!

Q - During our home inspection, you indicated that there were leaks in the drain lines of the kitchen and powder room sinks. The current homeowner came back to us and indicated that was not the case - that there was no leakage. Who is right? L. F. in Chicago

A - Dear L. F. in Chicago,

(This issue was actually answered within hours after the inspection in order that the contract negotiation could be completed without delay.)

My advice to L. F. was to ask how the drains were being tested. If they were simply running water through the drain, there was a reasonable chance that the leak would not show itself. If, however, they plugged the drain in each sink, filled each sink with water, and then released the drain plugs, that would provide a more thorough test due to the increase in the amount of pressure placed at the respective drain joints/connections. This did, in fact, cause the leaks to be visible and prompted the sellers to take responsibility for the required repairs.

Though this is a common testing technique for existing homes, new home plumbing is generally tested by injecting air into the lines, sealing the openings, and then waiting a prescribed amount of time for which the plumbing must maintain the same level of air pressure.