



P.O. Box 3956, Champaign, IL 61826-3956

TODAY'S PROMPT PAYMENT,
BUILDS TOMORROW'S CREDIT!

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June Newsletter

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

WARNING!! ; Please remember to keep any BBQ grills at least 2ft from the side of your home. Placing a grill too close to the side of your home will cause several different types of hazards including accidental fires. We hope that you will enjoy the warmer months to come and please remember to practice safety first!.

Thinking of moving? We would like to keep you as a customer so, please check-out our website at:

www.hughesre.com

to view any available rentals. We also have an advertisement in the News Gazette listing all available rentals.

Thank You.

The Easy Way to Maintain Your Yard

The amount of time and money you spend maintaining your lawn depends a lot on what your idea of a lawn should be-not necessarily what your lawn actually needs. Early lawns of the Middle Ages did not require much maintenance. That's because they were inspired by glades or grassy openings in the forest (not pictures in magazines or golf courses). These lawns were meadow-like mixtures of grasses and flowers that were planted amongst fruit trees, vines, flowers and herbs and enclosed by fences or courtyards. There was no mowing. Grass was kept from growing too tall by trampling it into a soft, woven mat-like surface. If you too can adjust your expectations to taller grass, a mix of other plants in your turf, such as clover, and midsummer periods when your grass temporarily turns brown, you can achieve a low-maintenance lawn-and one that's closer to the original spirit of the lawn.

* THE RIGHT HEIGHT

There are several reasons not to cut your grass too short. First, grass grows from the crown, not the blade tips. This trait makes grass ideal for lawns because they keep on growing despite the regular mowing off of their upper stem, leaf sheath and blades. This is also why it's important not to damage grass crowns by accidental scalping with the mower. No crown, no grassy Second, keeping grass on the longer side also allows it greater surface area to carry out photosynthesis. This in turn results in healthier plants. Third, taller grass grows slower than shorter grass. You can use this simple fact to eliminate up to 20 percent of the mowing you do annually. That's a savings of about 8 hours for the average lawn owner, not to mention a savings of gasoline and wear and tear on equipment. Finally, by keeping your grass at high end of its recommended mowing height, you can prevent 90 percent of all weeds from germinating and thereby eliminate the need for herbicides.

Next, determine how much water it takes to moisten soil to just beyond your root depth. A good rule of thumb is that you will need one to two inches, once or

twice a week. If your soil is porous and drains quickly, you would apply one inch of water at the twice-a-week frequency. Conversely, if your soil holds water well, a good guess would be two inches once a week.

To accurately determine how long to run your sprinkler to deliver the desired amount of water, set out cans after a four-to-five day dry spell. Then run your sprinkler until you have delivered one inch of water to your lawn. Wait twenty-four hours to allow the water

If one inch of water moistens soil to a depth well beyond the root depth, try the procedure again but deliver less water. Conversely, if the root depth is not reached, try delivering more water. Keep accurate records of how long you run your sprinkler to deliver the required amounts of water, and base future waterings on what you have learned. If it rains during the week, decrease your watering by the amount of rain. If it has been hot and sunny or windy, you may need to increase your watering amount and frequency.

Building a Good Credit Rating.

Every 6 months we review our residents' payment and performance histories. We report GOOD performance as well as BAD performance to a **National Resident Reporting Service**. Some of the positive benefits to this process are: 1) Helping a resident establish or keep a good credit report and resident rating. 2) Good reference for the home buying / loan qualifying process. 3) Excellent method for "re-building" a bad credit rating. 4) Good reference for future landlords, bankers, car dealers, and others that you want to do business with.

It is our goal to always notify a resident if unfavorable items are about to be reported. Because a good or bad report can stay with you for years, it is important that you establish a good report immediately and maintain good standing throughout your lease term. For example, if you pay rent late, you will get a bad report that will effect your ability to rent property in the future, buy a home, get a car loan, get a credit card or obtain any other financing or credit.

Give your house a thorough going-over this summer.

Summer is upon us, and it's time to check out your home to assess winter's damage and to prepare for warm weather living.

START WITH THE EXTERIOR

- Check foundations for signs of termites or carpenter ant. Call the property management office (359-0203) if you find any.
- Also check for wasp or hornet nests. Following label directions carefully, use a commercial spray to destroy them.
- Fill masonry cracks and other materials. Check the joint between the porch roof and the house for cracks and water stains.
- Check the porch foundation for uneven settling. Replace the footings if needed.
- Remove debris from window wells and cellarways.
- Wash vinyl, aluminum or painted wood siding.
- Check all wood surfaces for paint failure and damage. Re-nail loose siding and trim; replace any decayed sections. Repaint as needed.
- Re-nail loose boards on the deck and refit loose patio bricks or stones.

CHECK ALL DOORS AND WINDOWS

- Make sure all doors close properly.
- Label and store removable storm windows and doors.
- Wash the windows and the screens.

Patch or repair any holes.

- Replace cracked window glass; re-putty loose window panes.
- Replace worn or damaged weather stripping and doors if needed.
- Lubricate movable hardware (hinges, locks, casement window cranks).
- Clean and lubricate the tracks of sliding doors

CHECK OUT THE ROOF

- Check for damaged shingles.
- Inspect the flashing at the chimney, dormers, valleys and vents, and repair as required.
- Replace loose mortar between chimney bricks. Check the condition of the rain guard or chimney cap.
- Clean gutters, downspouts and leaf strainers. Check for damage and paint failure, and for leaks at the seams.
- Repair broken screens in vents and louvers.
- Check fascias and soffits for paint failure and decay.

CHECK YOUR YARD

- Rake up all of the winter debris to avoid damaging your mower when you cut the grass.
- Remove debris from storm drains.
- Fill driveway cracks. Seal blacktop

or concrete, or add gravel to an unpaved driveway.

- Repair cracked walkways.
- Sand rust from metal fences; paint.
- Check wood fences and posts for decay and wood-boring insects
- Trim overgrown trees and shrubs that may damage siding, clog gutters or harbor pests.
- Bring out and clean the outdoor furniture.
- Check and clean the barbecue grill.
- Examine any play equipment to be sure that it is still in good, sturdy condition.

REVIEW INSIDE OF HOUSE

- Open basement and attic windows to ventilate.
- Have a qualified inspector check any stains or bulges on ceilings and walls.
- Check all household drains and clean them if they're sluggish.
- Clean or replace air filters in air conditioners. Vacuum the units and install them if they have been stored.
- Have the chimney cleaned.

Cool off, but with less of a payout to the power company.

I'm expecting this one to be of high interest right about now. We'll see if the East Central Illinois weather cooperates. In other words, whether it's miserably hot and humid. Eartheasy at www.eartheasy.com has a collection of suggestions about how to cool off naturally, or at least with less of a boost in your power bill.

The list includes big projects such as landscaping to shade your home and simple things, such as using the microwave or the barbecue to cook (thus producing little heat or producing the heat outside) instead of your regular oven.

Other interesting suggestions: Install ceiling fans, which cost pennies a day to run and allow you scale back your expensive air conditioning by 9% and still get the same cooling effect, says eartheasy.

Or, switch to compact florescent lights, which cost more initially but use less electricity, give off a lot less heat and last a lot longer.

Should you decide to use the barbecue as a heat-fighting strategy, check out www.eartheasy.org, from the American Dietetic Association, which offers food safety tips for barbecuing.

Some of them are common sense, such as keep your meat refrigerated until the coals are ready.

Others I wouldn't have thought of on my own, the stuff the chicken or ribs have been sitting in overnight. Seems the used marinade can be crawling with nasty bacteria. I recommend against licking the brush.

This site has lots of other good material on nutrition and diet, for example: 20 ways to work exercise into the natural course of your daily life and 10 fairly palatable ways to get fiber in your diet.

If you want to fix on the facts about fiber and other nutritional issues, try www.nutritionnewsfocus.com, a site that casts experts' skeptical eyes at media-hyped nutrition trends.

Meanwhile, the site www.weight.com gives a medically oriented view of diet and weight control, again to offset what the author, a doctor, sees as misinformation in the popular media.