

Home Improvement: Spring Spruce-up

Use Mild Spring Weather To Get Your Home Shipshape For The Summer

(NAPSA)—Warmer spring temperatures naturally make most homeowners think about the summer season ahead. This spring, don't just think about it. Use the milder weather to get your property in tip-top shape so you can relax once the sunny days arrive.

"Spring is the perfect time to tackle the little fix-up projects you don't want to hassle with when the weather's nice," says Jim Rocchetta of Handyman Connection, one of the nation's largest home improvement companies. "Plus, you'll have your home looking great before you and your friends head outside for those backyard get-togethers."

Start with the deck or patio. Clean weathered deck boards with a biodegradable deck cleaner. Replace worn boards. Check railings for looseness or wear, and repair them if needed. Then ensure that your deck looks great all summer by protecting it from mildew and water damage with a high-quality finish and preservative.

Once the deck is done, Rocchetta suggests inspecting the exterior of your home for signs of mold or mildew growing on wood, vinyl or aluminum siding. There are many effective and easy-to-use EPA-registered products for killing mildew, cleaning away the discoloration and protecting surfaces from future growth.

While you're checking the outside of your house for mildew, also be on the lookout for cracks or holes in siding or foundation walls. Repair the damage now before it gets worse.

Even though you aren't using them yet, don't forget about your air conditioners. Check for leaks, clean the filters and have necessary service performed before the mercury rises. "A quick check of your home's insulation and window seals is another good way to



A great home improvement project for the warmer months is taking care of your deck.

keep your air-conditioning units operating at peak efficiency," says Rocchetta.

This spring, check the drainage around your home. When spring showers arrive, take advantage of the opportunity to inspect gutters and drainage tiles. A visual inspection on a rainy day will quickly reveal problems.

Finally, spring is a great time to gear up for big summer projects by taking a quick inventory of your toolbox, Rocchetta suggests. Do you have a good hammer, tape measure, wire cutters and a utility knife? How about screwdrivers and wrenches? You'll need them in various sizes and shapes for different applications. Do you have plenty of electrical tape, screws, nails and wood glue? Are your drills and saws in good working order? "Do-it-yourselfers should also make sure they have a good first-aid kit handy," Rocchetta adds with a grin.

Jim Rocchetta is vice president of Marketing for Handyman Connection, a nationwide network of home improvement and repair contractors. For more information, call (800) 88-HANDY or visit Handyman Connection online at www.handymanconnection.com.