



Summer 2014

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Rest is not  
idleness,  
and to lie  
sometimes  
on the grass  
under trees on a  
summer's day,  
listening  
to the murmur  
of the water,  
or watching the  
clouds float  
across the sky,  
is by no means a  
waste of time.

John Lubbock

## Home Maintenance Tips for Summer



Summer brings sunshine, green leaves, and trips to the beach. But the warm, dry season also offers the perfect chance to get some work done around the house. With just a few weekends' worth of work, these tips can help get your home in tip-top shape and ready for the rest of the year.

When it gets warm, it's tempting to ditch any housework for the beach or the golf course. Hard as it may be, consider suppressing that urge for a few weekends, because some fairly easy work can improve the state of your home, give it an appearance makeover, and even save you some money.

### Keep Your Cool With a Fan

There's an easy trick to keeping cooler and saving money, and it's as close as your ceiling fan. Switch the ceiling fan's blades so the leading edge is higher as the fan turns, so you can feel the breeze from the fan as it rotates. This simple action will push cool air down, enabling you to set the air-conditioning lower and save money on energy.

### Clean Your Dryer Vent

Without some maintenance, your dryer could cause a house fire. The U.S. Fire Administration reports nearly 16,000 dryer fires occur annually, which happen largely because dryers' vents get clogged with lint and dust. Thankfully, you can avoid any unnecessary dryer-caused danger with a few simple steps. First, you'll need a vent-cleaning brush kit, which can clean your dryer vent tubing more thoroughly than a vacuum cleaner can. Begin by cleaning the dryer's lint trap housing with a smaller brush to remove as much lint and dust as possible. Then disconnect the dryer duct from the dryer and the wall for a thorough cleaning. Also use a brush to clean the vent on the outside of the house to keep both ends clean and free of lint.

### Clean Your Gutters

Water and debris can accumulate in your gutters over the fall and winter, which can lead to water damage in your house. So get a ladder that can reach your gutters, but be sure not to overextend yourself. Don't lean the ladder against the gutter or near electrical wires. Scoop out the gutter's wet leaves and debris, and wet down caked-on dirt so you can scoop out the mud with a trowel. Also, use a garden hose to flush the gutters after you've cleaned them. This will get the gutters clean, and it will also let you know if you have leaks. Then use the hose to wash out your downspouts to make sure they're not clogged. But be gentle, downspouts aren't meant to withstand the same water pressure as a house drain. You may also consider covering your gutters with a wire mesh guard to keep debris out.

### Keep Your Deck Healthy

Your deck provides a great place to hang out in the summer, but it needs a little TLC to stay in good shape. Visually inspect the boards to look for curling, cracked, or rotting wood. If you see a board that's damaged, remove it and replace it with a board that you've cut to fit the same space. Go underneath your deck to make sure the support structure is in good shape, and keep an eye out for cracked boards and missing screws or nails. If you see signs of insects or unwanted animals, such as spider webs or chewed boards, call a pest-control expert to take care of the problem. Lastly, if your deck is sealed or stained, some experts say you should refinish it annually. Start by power washing the deck, then letting it thoroughly dry. Remove the finish or seal with a remover/stripper, and let it dry again. With a sander and medium-grit sandpaper, lightly sand the deck, then remove all of the dust before continuing. Before you apply your finish, do a small test area to make sure you've got the right color. If you do, apply the finish with the wood's grain and don't stop in the middle—that can cause uneven coloring and streaks.

### Spruce Up Your Paint Job

When your house looks good, it makes your entire property look better. So every summer, use a power washer and a mild detergent to clean your house's exterior. With just a little work, you can get rid of dirt, dust, bird droppings, tree sap, and more. And it provides a good opportunity for you to inspect your house and make sure everything is still in good order.



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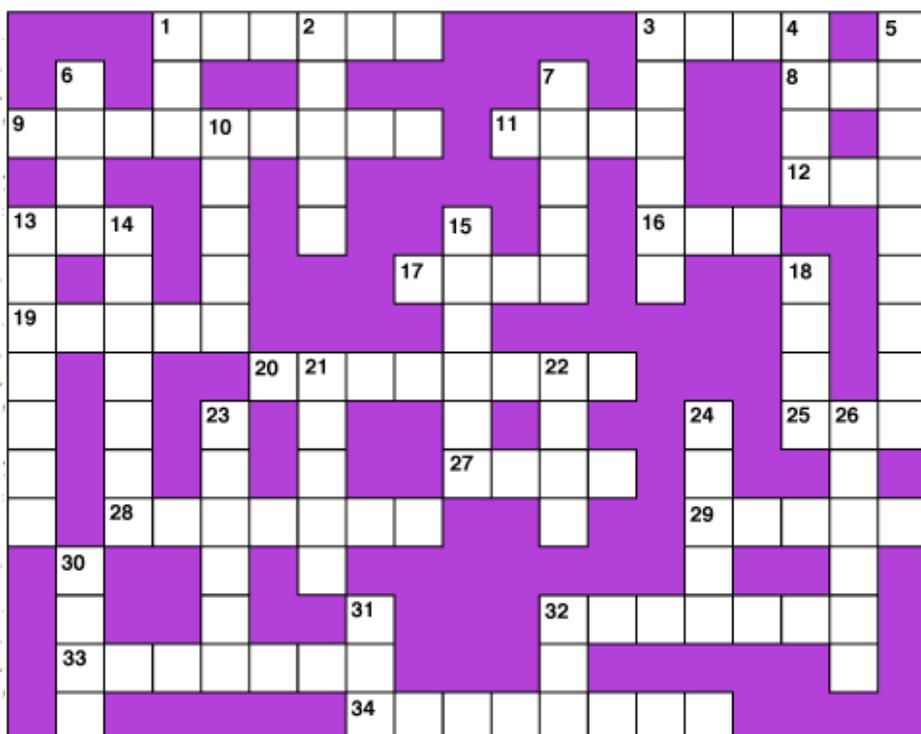
## From Jeff's Desk



*I am writing this letter on an airplane returning from a trip to Alaska to visit our daughter and son-in-law. We were able to experience a part of the world that most people will never see. We walked on glaciers. We watched a grizzly bear feed while bald eagles were soaring overhead. We came across a black bear cub that had been separated from its mother. We saw black-tail deer, moose, whales, sea otters and seals. We caught salmon in the river with the majestic, snow covered Wrangle Mountains in the background. As we look back on this trip, however, the most memorable part was simply spending time with our family!*

*Jeff Musser*

## SUMMER CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

1. light rain
3. string \_\_\_\_\_
8. single
9. jumping & hopping game
11. summer month
12. have lunch
13. very warm
16. city home for wild animals
17. summer month
19. sandy spot
20. water sport
25. used to pave roads
27. relax
28. step back
29. very humid weather
32. warm weather footwear
33. \_\_\_\_\_ storm
34. thrilling

### DOWN

1. short form of sister
2. time piece
3. cool wind
4. musical symbol
5. summer month
6. go it alone
7. weather word
10. capture
13. leisure activities
14. follows a car
15. June 21
18. always do your \_\_\_\_\_
21. pools are full of this
22. birds home
23. suntan \_\_\_\_\_
24. hot & \_\_\_\_\_
26. summer month
30. better \_\_\_\_\_ than never
31. \_\_\_\_\_ you sleeping?
32. take a seat