

# Spring Home & Garden and Car Care

Itemizer-Observer • Section C  
March 16, 2016

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a pink and white striped shirt, is smiling from the driver's side window of a silver car. She is holding a white rectangular sign with black text. The background shows a white picket fence and pink roses.

**Car Care  
starts on  
page 12**



# March Planning from **Oregon State** | **Extension** UNIVERSITY | **Service**

## Planning

- Plan your vegetable garden carefully for spring, summer, and fall vegetables that can be eaten fresh or preserved. If you lack in-ground gardening space, plan an outdoor container garden.
- Use a soil thermometer to help you know when to plant vegetables. Some cool season crops (onions, kale, lettuce, spinach) can be planted when the soil is consistently at or above 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

## Maintenance and Clean Up

- Lawn mowing: Set blade at 0.75 to 1 inch for bentgrass lawns; 1.5 to 2.5 inches for bluegrasses, fine fescues and ryegrasses.
- Compost grass clippings and yard waste, except for clippings from lawns where weed-and-feed products or herbicides (weed killers) have been used.
- Spread compost over garden and landscape areas.
- Prune gooseberries and currants; fertilize with manure or a complete fertilizer.
- Fertilize evergreen shrubs and trees, only if needed. If established and healthy, their nutrient needs should be minimal.
- If needed, fertilize rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas with acid-type fertilizer. If established and healthy, their nutrient needs should be minimal.
- Western Oregon: Prune spring-flowering shrubs after blossoms fade.
- Western Oregon: Fertilize caneberries using band fertilizer, broadcast fertilizer or a complete fertilizer or manure.

## Planting/Propagation

- Divide hosta, daylilies and mums.
- Use stored scion wood to graft fruit and ornamental trees.
- Plant insectary plants (e.g. Alyssum, Phacelia, coriander, candytuft, sunflower, yarrow, and dill) to attract beneficial insects to the garden.
- Western Oregon: If soil is dry enough, prepare vegetable garden and plant early cool-season crops (carrots, beets, broccoli, leeks, parsley, chives, rhubarb, peas and radishes). Plant onions outdoors as soon as the soil is dry enough to work.
- Western Oregon: Berry crops (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, currants, gooseberries and other berry-producing crop plants).

## Pest Monitoring and Management

- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Don't treat unless a problem is identified.
- Spray trees and shrubs for webworms and leafrollers, if present.
- Protect new plant growth from slugs. Least toxic management options include barriers and traps. Baits are also available for slug control; use with caution around pets. Read and follow all label directions prior to using baits or any other chemical control.
- Learn to identify the predatory insects that can help to keep aphids and other pests under control.
- Spray to control leaf and twig fungus diseases in dogwood, sycamore, hawthorn and willow trees.
- Prune ornamentals for air circulation and to help prevent fungus diseases.
- Western Oregon: Monitor for European crane fly and treat lawns if damage has been verified.
- Western Oregon: Start rose blackspot control tactics at budbreak. Control rose diseases such as black spot. Remove infected leaves. Spray as necessary with registered fungicide.

Trade-name products and services are mentioned as illustrations only. This does not mean that the Oregon State University Extension Service endorses these products and services or intends to discriminate against products and services not mentioned. For additional OSU Extension gardening information, visit: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening>

The Oregon State University Extension Service encourages sustainable gardening practices. Preventative pest management is emphasized over reactive pest control. Always identify and monitor problems before acting and opt for the least toxic approach that will remedy the problem. The conservation of biological control agents (predators, parasitoids) should be favored over chemical controls. Use chemical controls only when necessary and only after thoroughly reading the pesticide label. First consider cultural, then physical and biological controls. Choose the least-toxic options (insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, and organic and synthetic pesticides — when used judiciously). Recommendations in this calendar are not necessarily applicable to all areas of Oregon. For more information, contact your local Extension office at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/find-us>



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# What to Know Before Renovating or Building a Home



**Polymer slate and shake roofing tiles add beauty and durability to a home.**

(StatePoint) Building a home or making upgrades? One of the most important factors to consider is the material used. While “all-natural” may be an appealing quality on your plate, in construction, man-made products often provide more options and value.

Seek out materials offering durability, energy-efficiency and resistance to threats like fire and wicked weather. Many such high-quality products are domestic, so you can support US manufacturing while making key choices.

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## **Plucky Plumbing**

Perhaps your toilet rattles and leaks; maybe your tub and sink look dingy no matter how much you clean them. If it's time to replace bathroom elements, use newer materials offering water efficiency, style and safety benefits.

Look for a toilet marked with the WaterSense label, which indicates it's been certified to be at least 20 percent more efficient without sacrificing performance. The free Water Savings Calculator at the Mansfield

Plumbing website can help you determine your return-on-investment.

For a coordinated look, consider a suite of products that work together, like the Affordable Style Designer series from Mansfield Plumbing. You get a toilet, tub and sink, all in the same style.

Switching to an easy-access SmartHeight toilet can be another smart move. Options in the bathroom like grab bars, walk-in tubs and pedestal sinks, all provide enhanced safety and comfort.

## **Gorgeous Windows**

Over time, windows can look old and become difficult to operate. Make wise replacement choices that add beauty and privacy to key areas of your home without compromising light entry.

Whether it's an acrylic block window over a bathtub or a set of decorative glass windows in the kitchen, privacy windows are a great accent for any room. Those from Hy-Lite are offered in a variety of styles, sizes and enhancements. Operable awning, casement, slide and single hung units can

easily be opened to encourage airflow.

Their Home Designer Collection features nods to architectural styles like Metro, Mission, Prairie and Baroque to complement any home.

## **The Roof**

Your roof is your protective layer, between the elements and you. Ideally it should be impact- and fire-resistant, as well as beautiful. Natural slate and shake roofing materials evoke traditional charm; however they tend to degrade over time. Look for the manmade alternative.

Polymer slate and shake roofing tiles capture the authentic look of natural materials but are more resistant to chipping, flaking and splintering. For example, DaVinci Roofscapes offers an impressive array of more than 50 colors and blends for an enhanced look, plus they resist fire and severe weather. Their roofs also come with a lifetime limited warranty, saving you big on repairs, inspection and maintenance down the line.

To be a savvy homeowner, don't leave it to chance. Select durable, high-quality man-made products.





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# Tips to Spruce Up Your Outdoor Spaces for the Season

(StatePoint) When the weather warms up, it's all about relaxing outdoors. But it's possible you've neglected upkeep on your home's outdoor spaces during the chilly months of winter.

To enjoy yourself more this season, take time to spruce up your yard. Here are some quick tips.

- **Do a Survey** Take a walk around the perimeter of your patio, deck and yard to survey what needs to be cleaned, repaired or replaced. Did potted plants and lawn ornaments survive the cooler months? Are outdoor light fixtures functioning? Are fallen branches littering the yard? Make a mental to-do list.

- **Deep Clean** Like interior spaces, periodic deep cleans are necessary outdoors too. But don't waste your leisure time.

"With the right tools you can work smart, not hard," says Jeff Devlin, host on a popular home improvement channel. "A heavy-duty cleaner, such as Mean Green Degreaser, not only works indoors, but is ideal for my toughest outdoor cleaning jobs."

Devlin recommends using the Super Strength multi-surface formula — which is lab-tested to clean and remove grease, grime, mildew, dirt, and oil



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) oocoskun - Fotolia.com

more effectively than its competitors — to clean and remove mildew from patios, outdoor furniture, concrete, composite and wood fences and siding, as well as to clean and degrease tools, lawn equipment and grills. Use it as a concentrated spray or diluted solution. Clean with a brush or sponge.

"For your toughest jobs, add it to your pressure washer," says Devlin. Helpful cleaning tips can be found at MeanGreenDegreaser.com.

- **Routine Maintenance** Perform routine upkeep to keep items from falling into disrepair or becoming overgrown or unkempt.

Sweep walkways and your deck regularly, especially if they are situated under trees. Promote a healthy lawn by mowing it regularly, never removing

more than one-third of the grass blade. Keep gutters devoid of leaves and debris so that water does not collect in your yard or at the base of your home's structure. Rinse patio furniture, umbrellas and awnings using water or a diluted cleaner.

Spring is in the air. With a little effort, you can be prepared to make the most of it.

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# Spring Tips to Attract Beautiful Birds to Your Yard

(StatePoint) When hosting neighbors and friends for spring gatherings, your thoughts may dwell on accommodating guests. But how often do you consider your animal visitors?

“During spring, flocks of birds migrate and are looking for places to refuel and rest,” says Spencer Schock, Founder of WindowAlert, makers of bird-friendly products for homes. “A few small tweaks to your yard, is like placing out a welcome mat.”

Unfortunately, migration is not without peril or hardship, but Schock says turning your home into a refuge for birds can be fun and add beauty to your yard. He offers these tips to keep feathered travelers safe during their migratory journey.

- **Protect flight:** Millions of birds die annually by striking glass, making windows a hazard to birds in flight. Try applying special decals that reflect ultraviolet sunlight to your home's windows, particularly those windows that are highly reflective of open sky.

The decals won't affect your view because they're virtually invisible to humans, but will help keep birds safe. For example, those from WindowAlert have patterns that give the appearance of slightly frosted translucent glass, but glow like a stoplight for birds. The brand also makes a high-tech liquid called WindowAlert UV Liquid, which can be applied between decals.

Such ultraviolet decals have been scientifically proven to keep birds safer. A 2015 American Bird Conservancy Study found that the more WindowAlert



PHOTO SOURCE: Sumikophoto - Fotolia.com

**“By making a few simple modifications to your yard and home, you can assist birds on their long journey,” says Schock.**

decals that were applied to a piece of glass covering the departure point of a flight tunnel, the more birds avoided it (a net protected all the birds in the study from actually getting hurt, no matter where they chose to fly).

- **Bed and Breakfast:** Birdfeeders come in all shapes, sizes and styles, and simply adding one to your yard can help beautify it and give birds the energy needed to continue their flight.

Remember though, bird strikes are often a problem near bird feeders, as feeding birds are easily frightened and are apt to take wild, evasive flight; position feeders closer than three feet or farther than 30 feet from windows. If your feeder is close to the window, birds fly away from the house. Believe it or not, the safest type of feeder is the kind that attach to the window itself.

You can also make your home's outdoor spaces more bird-friendly filling your garden with the right plants and flowers for pollinating bird species.

- **Watch and record:** Grab a pair of binoculars and a field guide book and take note of the types of birds you see and when. This will help you become better prepared for next season. In addition, consider becoming a “citizen scientist” by submitting your observations to The Audubon Society and Cornell University's database at ebird.org.

For more tips on making your home and garden a bird haven, visit WindowAlert.com.

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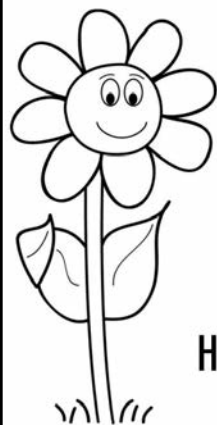
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# Home-Hunting Tips in a Seller's Market

(StatePoint) Are you on a serious hunt for a new home? Whether it's your first time as a real estate buyer or you've done this many times before, you may experience a learning curve. After all, the market is forever in-flux, and experts advise that, these days, there are some distinctive challenges involved in becoming a homeowner.

"If you want to snag your dream home in a seller's market, then you'd better be on your game," says Grant Simmons, who drives the consumer marketing strategy for Homes.com, a leading online real estate resources site, with close to three million real estate listings for sale or for rent.

Simmons is offering expert tips to give buyers a leg up in today's competitive marketplace.

- **Know what you want:** Make a list of the features you desire in your next home, and then separate them into wants and needs.

Having your priorities in order will help you better determine whether a house truly suits your needs and where you're willing to compromise.

- **Use your imagination:** Buying a live-in ready home offers convenience, but you can potentially save thousands of dollars on the front end on an ugly or tired home with great bones or personality. Choose a real estate agent with vision who can help you find the diamond in the rough in your



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Goodluz - Fotolia.com

**It may be a seller's market, but with smart research, foresight and planning, you can make a wise purchase.**

desired location. Remember, there can be large return on small, affordable updates.

- **Know the deal-breakers:** In a seller's market, you may feel pressured to sign on the dotted line as soon as you find that home you really like. Before committing to a mortgage, do your due diligence. A shoddy roof, bad plumbing, foundation issues, outdated wiring and water damage are costly headaches you may not want to take on in a new home.

- **Do smart research:** The Internet is your friend. So rather than cast a wide net, conduct smart searches. Sites like Homes.com make real estate searches easier by connecting buyers with timely and accurate listing information, as well as the listing agent. The site also features comprehensive, valuable data on the quality of life in local neighborhoods, including market reports, commute calculators, school scores and cost-of-living analyses. For more information, as well as such free

resources as downloadable house-hunting checklists, tips and mortgage calculators, visit [www.Homes.com](http://www.Homes.com).

- **Get serious:** Busy real estate agents with a tight schedule prioritize serious prospective buyers. Be first on their list. Before you discover your dream home, get your financial ducks in a row, because when competition is fierce, you can't afford to wait for mortgage approval.

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| 12         | 13     | 14       | 15        | 16       | 17     | 18       |
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# Beginner's Guide to Herb Gardening

Planting an herb garden is not only a great way to create a lush oasis in your back or front yard, but also an easy way to season your cooking or make home remedies. Most herbs produce interesting foliage which can grow quite large over the course of a couple seasons. To maintain your garden and get the best growth out of your plants, follow these tips for herb gardening for beginners.

## Planting an herb garden

Growing an herb garden starts by correctly plotting out where to plant the herbs. It's important that they're positioned to receive the appropriate amount of water and sunlight. Additionally, you want to ensure they have enough room to grow.

- Herbs thrive in lots of sunlight, so be sure you plant them in an area that receives full sun, meaning sun throughout the day. The only exception here is if you live in a particularly hot, sunny environment. In that case, some afternoon shade can help protect them from scorching and drying out.

- You'll get the biggest and best results if you plant your herb garden directly in the ground. This gives the roots plenty of room to grow and draw nutrients. But, potted herbs can also be a success. Just be sure to use a large pot for the best results. Mint is one herb that's best kept in a pot. It's rampant in its growth and can take over an entire garden if planted directly in the soil.

- Position the herbs at least two to three feet away from each other to allow them maximum space to grow.

## Caring for the soil in your herb garden

Once you have your garden bed selected and an idea of where you'll place the plants, it's time to prepare the soil.

- You want the soil to be rich and loose so it drains well. When herbs sit in too much water, it chokes their growth. If you're starting your garden in a

bed of hard clay, you'll have to till the soil. Use a tiller with sharp tiller tines to get down several inches into the dirt.

- Water your herb garden regularly. To ensure your herbs reach their full potential, check the soil every couple days to see if it feels dry. This is more effective than simply putting out a sprinkler on a regular basis. You need to know how your soil drains to avoid over or under watering.

- As a general rule, herbs don't require much in terms of fertilizing or feeding. The best nutrient you can add to the soil if you want to fortify it is some compost or organic fertilizer.

## How to harvest your herbs

So, now that your herbs are in the ground and growing, what's the best way to harvest leaves from them? With some plants, you may be afraid of pruning them too often, but herbs actually need to be regularly trimmed. And, it's as simple as taking pruning shears and cutting off what you need. This not only lets you use them as needed, but also helps promote their growth and keep them healthy.

To prune your plants, wait for them to grow almost eight inches high. Then, you can clip as much as you need. If you choose to trim most of the plant, be sure to leave several leaves that can continue to soak up the sunlight and help the plant bloom again. If you only need a few leaves or sprigs, you can trim just a little off.

## Nurturing your herb garden through the winter

If you live in a climate with a finite growing season, you may be wondering what to do with your herbs when the weather turns colder. Most herbs can be brought indoors during winter months and kept alive so long as they are located on or near a windowsill that receives a lot of light. There are some herbs that will survive outside through the winter and bloom again in the spring. These perennial herbs include lavender, mint, sage and thyme.

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## Saving Gas Beyond The Pump

Gas prices are expected to dip below a \$3 average.

Multiply your savings by investing the money you save in vehicle maintenance.

### Engine Performance Maintenance:



Keeping your vehicle properly tuned improves gas mileage an average

4%

Fixing a serious issue, such as a faulty oxygen sensor, can improve mileage

40%

#### Tire Pressure



Proper inflation can improve gas mileage

3.3%

#### Motor Oil



The correct oil improves gas mileage

1-2%

#### Air Filter



Replace a clogged air filter to improve vehicle performance

#### Gas Cap



Damaged, loose or missing gas caps allow gas to escape & vaporize

Be Car Care Aware

<http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/maintain.jsp>  
Car Care Guide, 2014, Car Care Council | [www.carcare.org](http://www.carcare.org)

## Easy Steps to Better Gas Mileage

With the average price of gas dipping below two dollars per gallon for the first time since 2009, many motorists have been seeing a real savings at the pump. Putting some of that savings toward basic auto care can lead to more miles per gallon and, in turn, more savings, says the non-profit Car Care Council.

The Car Care Council encourages motorists to be car care aware and perform these five simple steps to improve fuel economy and save money.

**1. Check Tire Pressure:** Keep tires properly inflated and improve gas mileage by up to 3.3 percent.

**2. Use the Right Motor Oil:** Improve gas mileage by 1 to 2 percent by using the grade of motor oil recommended by the manufacturer.

**3. Replace Clogged Air Filters:** Replacing clogged air filters on older vehicles can improve fuel economy and will improve performance and acceleration on all vehicles.

**4. Check Engine Performance:** Keep your engine running efficiently and improve gas mileage by an average of 4 percent.

**5. Fix It:** Addressing a serious maintenance problem, like a faulty oxygen sensor, can improve mileage by as much as 40 percent, according to [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).

“Proactive vehicle maintenance is a motorist’s best money saving tip,” said Rich White, executive director, Car Care Council. “Routine auto care not only helps save on fuel costs, but it helps identify small issues so they can be serviced before they become bigger and more costly to repair.”

To help motorists increase fuel economy and take better care of their vehicles, the Car Care Council offers valuable tools on its website, including a free personalized schedule and email reminder service.

The Car Care Council is the source of information for the “Be Car Care Aware” consumer education campaign promoting the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair to consumers. For a free copy of the council’s popular Car Care Guide or for more information, visit [www.carcare.org](http://www.carcare.org).

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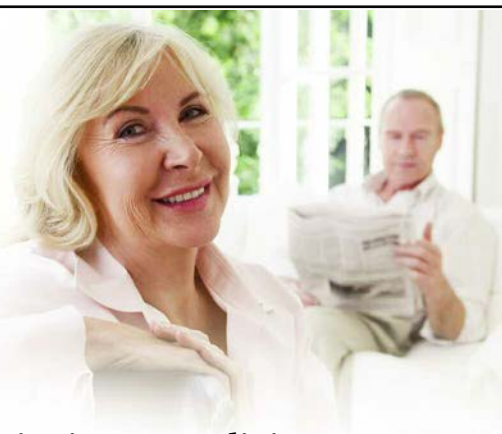


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# More car fires happen every year from deferred maintenance than accidents

*Keep your family safe; have your car checked today!*

Regular oil changes are your best investment toward the longevity of your engine! Keep your car running longer with preventative maintenance!

Regular brake inspections are the best way to ensure safe and reliable braking and minimize the cost of repairs when brake service is needed. Safety comes first, have your brakes checked regularly!

Routine engine performance checks can be your best guarantee of good performance and fuel economy. Economical and dependable, have your engine checked today!

Signs of an alignment problem include uneven tire wear, shaking and the car pulling to one side. Annual alignment checks are your best way to maximize tire life and ensure that your car performs on the road as it should.

Proper tire inflation can improve gas mileage by more than 3% or ten cents per gallon when maintained regularly. Save money and wear and tear on your tires!

A loose gas cap can trigger the "Check Engine" or "Service Engine Soon" light. Make sure the cap is secure and tight. Always check!

Musty smell? It could be a dirty or clogged cabin air filter. Regular checks will protect your HVAC system and allow passengers to breathe easier.

Washing and polishing is the best way to protect your car's finish from the damaging effects of acid rain. Your car is a big investment, take care of it!

Nearly 60% of people claim their driving habit has changed due to rising gas prices, with 90% saying they drive less and 75% revealing that they are

maintaining their vehicles better.

Regular vehicle maintenance improves fuel efficiency and produces less vehicle emissions. Help the environment and save a little money, have your car checked today!

Have your car's brake system inspected annually, even if you don't suspect any problems! Not all problems are noticeable- don't risk an accident from faulty brakes!

Good fuel economy, performance and low emissions are all effects of an efficiently-operating engine. Keep your engine running right!

If your car requires major engine work, it may be more economical to have your engine rebuilt rather than buying a different car.

Cooling system failure is a leading cause of vehicle breakdowns. Check coolant level frequently and change it according to your owner's manual to prevent serious damage or engine failure.

Carbon monoxide from your car's exhaust is odorless, colorless-and lethal. If you have any suspicions of a leak, have it checked out at once. Safety comes first!

Your car's engine can use more than 10,000 gallons of air for every gallon of fuel burned, so it's easy to see how big a job the air filter has. Does your air filter need to be replaced?

Inspect your car's lights at every oil change. Visibility is crucial to staying safe on the road!

You should test your battery every fall. If your car's battery is three years old or more, consider replacing it as the chance of failure increases. Does yours need to be replaced?

For longest automatic transmission life, have the fluid and filter changed every 24,000 36,000 miles. Does yours need to be changed?

Extreme weather is tough on wiper blades! Check and change wiper blades about every six months to ensure safety and visibility.

Some fluids levels, like coolant and brake fluid can be seen easily in their reservoirs once the hood is up. Take a look the next time you check your oil!

Smell something odd? Your car's smells can indicate health problems. Check with your mechanic or owner's manual about what they might mean.

If you perform your own oil changes, dispose of used oil properly! DO NOT pour down a sink or storm drain. Check with your local auto parts store or government for recycling options.

How you drive plays a role in your fuel consumption. Speeding, aggressive and jerky driving can reduce gas mileage as much as 33% on the highway and 5% on city streets.

A flashing check engine light indicates a problem that is currently happening and requires immediate attention.

Auto technicians say the key to keeping vehicles running well-today and down the road-is routine maintenance. Yet many drivers tend to stall when it comes to keeping up with some everyday auto-basics.



## A recent survey by the Car Care Council found:

- 25% of cars had low or dirty engine oil.
- 13% had low or contaminated brake fluid.
- 18% had dirty air filters.
- 17% had inadequate cooling protection or low coolant levels.
- 16% needed new windshield wiper and 27% had low or contaminated washer fluid.
- 18% needed new belts

Overall, 89% of vehicles were in need of at least one service or repair.

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# What's That Smell?



## 6 Vehicle Warning Smells Your Nose Can Recognize

01



### Burnt Rubber

The smell could mean slipping drive belts or misplaced loose hoses that might be rubbing against rotating accessory drive pulleys.

**Caution:** Do not reach in if the engine is hot.

### Hot Oil

The smell of hot oil could mean that oil is leaking onto the exhaust system. To verify the leak, look for oil on the pavement or smoke coming from the engine area.

**Caution:** Turn off the engine before checking for a leak.

02



03



### Gasoline

This smell is likely the sign of a gas leak, possibly a fuel injector line or the fuel tank.

**Caution:** Any smell of fuel is a possible fire hazard, so immediate attention should be given.

### Syrup

The sweet smell of syrup may be a sign that the car is leaking engine coolant from a component related to the car's cooling system.

**Caution:** Do not open the radiator cap when it is hot.

04



05



### Burning Carpet

This smell could be a sign of brake trouble. Have your brakes checked right away, especially if this smell is happening during normal driving conditions.

**Caution:** Brake trouble is a serious safety hazard.

### Rotten Eggs

This smell could mean the catalytic converter is not converting hydrogen sulfide in the exhaust to sulfur dioxide properly.

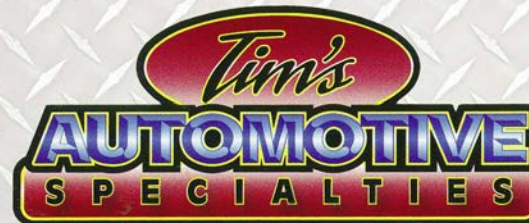
**Caution:** a poor running engine can cause the catalytic converter to become overloaded and fail due to meltdown.

06



## Spring Tune Up Time!

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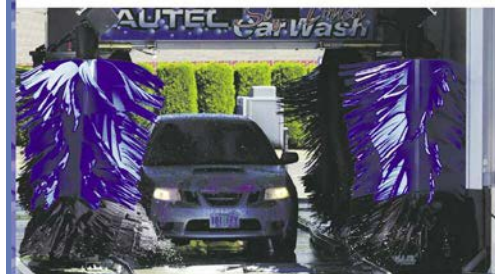
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## TIPS FOR FINDING THE RIGHT AUTO REPAIR SHOP

Looking for the right repair shop for your vehicle? The non-profit Car Care Council recommends asking a few simple questions to help identify an auto repair shop to properly care for one of your most valuable assets.

- **Does the business employ ASE-certified technicians?** Credentials and affiliations are indicators of professionalism and the management's commitment to training and education.
- **Is the shop and customer waiting area clean and organized?** Cleanliness and organization are signs of a well-run business.
- **Are customers greeted and treated in a friendly and respectful manner?** Many auto repair businesses excel in the area of customer service and satisfaction. A simple phone call to the shop to inquire about their services can give you a glimpse of how they treat customers.
- **Does the business provide a written estimate?** The business should complete a written estimate and request your signature prior to starting any repairs on your car.
- **Does the business offer a warranty?** Most auto repair businesses offer a warranty on parts and labor and the warranty is usually in writing or posted in the waiting area.
- **Does the business have a list of satisfied customers or references that it is willing to give you?** Satisfied customers and recommendations from family, friends and neighbors are helpful in finding a good shop. Many auto repair facilities also have company websites that are worth checking out, they often include testimonials and additional information about the business.

## Safety Features in Your Car That You May Not Know About

(StatePoint) Today's vehicles come with an abundance of new features and technologies that can aid drivers, make passengers more comfortable and provide real-time information about a vehicle's health. Most importantly, many vehicle technologies today are designed with safety in mind and have the potential to save lives.

The trouble is, too many drivers do not realize these features exist, or know how to use them to their full potential.

A recent University of Iowa study found 40 percent of drivers have been startled or surprised by something their vehicle has done -- a troubling finding given that car crashes are a leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

"Technology can be a game-changer when it comes to safety," said Deborah A.P. Hersman, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. "In order to fully recognize the benefits of these new systems, drivers need to be aware of them and also understand their limitations."

With this need in mind, NSC partnered with the University of Iowa to launch "My Car Does What" -- a virtual owner's manual that demystifies the latest, most cutting-edge vehicle features.

The campaign's website, [www.MyCarDoesWhat.org](http://www.MyCarDoesWhat.org), highlights technologies such as:

- **Back-up cameras** that provide a view of the blind zone directly behind the car when the vehicle is in reverse
- **Blind spot monitors** that alert drivers when something is in their blind spot
- **Forward collision warnings** that warn drivers when they are closing in on the vehicle ahead too quickly
- **Automatic emergency braking systems** that apply the brakes if the system detects an imminent collision
- **Anti-lock braking systems** that prevent wheels from locking up, helping to avoid uncontrolled skidding and providing some steering control in slippery conditions
- **Rear cross traffic alerts** that warn drivers if traffic is approaching from the left or right when the vehicle is in reverse
- **Adaptive cruise control** that maintains the speed set by the driver and a pre-set following distance
- **Lane departure warnings** that alert drivers if they drift into another lane when the turn signal is not activated.

For a full list of vehicle safety technologies, explanatory videos, graphics and articles, visit [MyCarDoesWhat.org](http://MyCarDoesWhat.org).



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Hoda Bogdan - Fotolia.com

**"The driver will always be a car's best safety feature; no technology today will change that," Hersman said. "But these features can help mitigate errors before they result in deaths and injuries."**

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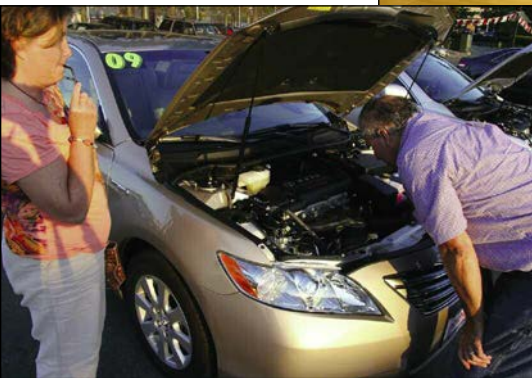
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# A new car vs. your used car: What's the greener option?

(BPT) - Buying a new car to reduce your carbon footprint seems logical. But surprisingly, keeping the vehicle already in your garage, or replacing it with a more fuel efficient used car may be a greener choice. That's because it takes a lot of energy and raw materials to manufacture a new vehicle.



"It varies between models, but it is reasonable to estimate building a new \$30,000 mid-size car will generate greenhouse gases that are the equivalent of 14 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>," says RockAuto.com Vice President, Tom Taylor.

The average car on the road is about 11 years old. EPA data shows that vehicles (cars and trucks) built in 2005, on average, emit 447 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per mile. A 2016 vehicle is expected to generate about 90 grams less than that every mile. Producing less CO<sub>2</sub> is good, but it would take more than 150,000 miles of driving for that 90 grams in CO<sub>2</sub> savings to add up and compensate for the 14,000 kg (14 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>) it took to build the new car. Especially for someone who does not drive a lot, it could be greener to just keep a well maintained older vehicle than to build a new one.

## How much do you save with an electric car?

Electric cars do not have tailpipes, but an electric car is still on the hook for "upstream CO<sub>2</sub>" emitted by the utility which provides the electricity for the car. The EPA estimates upstream CO<sub>2</sub> is around 100 grams per mile for most electric vehicles. That is a whopping 347 grams less than what is produced by the average vehicle built in 2005, but it would still take over 40,000 miles of driving before the electric car saved enough CO<sub>2</sub> to cover the greenhouse gas cost of building it in the first place.

## The environmental cost of servicing older cars

What about the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent discharged while making parts to fix an older car? Brake pads, struts, tires and other parts wear out as the miles pile up. Fortunately, unless the vehicle is involved in an accident, the structure that makes up most of a car will never need to be replaced.

Many smaller parts like alternators and major parts like engines and transmissions can be remanufactured. Remanufacturing means only the components that experience wear are replaced. Metal housings and other major pieces can be cleaned, refinished and reused. "Remanufacturing saves more than 80 percent of the energy and raw materials required to build a new part from scratch," Taylor says. Less energy and materials means less CO<sub>2</sub>.

Car manufacturers are using more recycled materials and updating factories to use less energy. Government mandates require future vehicles become increasingly more fuel efficient. "Upstream CO<sub>2</sub>" may decline as utility companies find new, greener ways to generate electricity. Nevertheless, keeping your current car well maintained or buying a more fuel efficient used car are currently great choices if you want to be green.



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# Spring Clean Your Car: Tips to Get Your Car in Great Condition

(StatePoint) For some, spring cleaning is a time-honored ritual, which doesn't just apply to your house. Remember that your car is likely in desperate need of some attention after the winter months.

"A car that's well-maintained is safer, cheaper to run, more reliable and can be worth more money at resale time," says Brian Moody, executive editor of Autotrader.

To help, Autotrader editors are sharing "Simple Spring Car Care" tips to get your car in tip-top shape for the busy driving season ahead:

- **Wash and wax your car thoroughly.**

If you can afford it, have it professionally detailed. However, if you do it yourself, be sure to use a pressure nozzle in order to rid your car of any leftover road salt or sand from the winter. Direct sunlight can cause a car's finish to become dull, but a thorough washing and waxing can also help keep your car's paint and clear coat looking good.

It's tempting to run the car through an automated car wash, but those big revolving brushes can dull the finish over time. If you're not allowed to wash your car at home due to regional laws or neighborhood rules,



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Rukawajung - Fotolia.com

**For better driving all season long, make sure your spring to-do list includes cleaning and maintaining your car.**

seek out a good drive-thru wash and hand wax instead.

- **Check and set your car's tire pressure** to the level specified in your owner's manual or on the driver's door sill. As temperatures warm up, the air in your tires can expand and that might impact the way the car handles.

Be sure not to over-inflate the tires. While low tire pressure can cause the tire to heat up if it's not rolling down the road properly, extreme over inflation can cause a blowout in high temperatures. If you're not comfortable doing this yourself, take your car to a shop like Big-O Tires, Sears Auto Center or Firestone Auto Care Center — those kinds of chains will usually do it for free.

- **Have a qualified mechanic do a visual inspection under the hood.** If you're comfortable doing this yourself, check

for worn belts or hoses and make sure your coolant (sometimes called anti-freeze) isn't too old. Coolant lasts a long time, but keeping track of when it was last changed, especially in older cars, can help you avoid overheating as the temperatures gradually climb.

For more tips for keeping your vehicle in great shape whether it's hot, cold, or rainy can be found at [www.Autotrader.com](http://www.Autotrader.com).

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# Keep the Earth Beautiful!

## COMPOST WORKS FOR YOU

Not only does composting help the environment, but it can help your garden, yard, and house plants too! When compost looks like soil and smells sweet and earthy, it is ready to use. Here are some of the most common ways to use compost:

### IN THE GARDEN

Before planting, mix a 4" to 8" layer of compost into newly reclaimed or poor soils. Mix a 1/2" to 3" layer of compost into annual garden beds at least once a year. Compost will add nutrients and beneficial microbes, hold water, and improve plant growth.



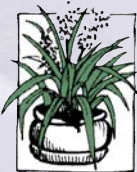
### AROUND THE YARD

Spread a 1" to 6" layer of coarse compost on soil as a mulch or spread a 1/2" layer of sifted, weed-seed free compost on turfgrass as a topdressing. These can be done anytime of year to improve soil fertility and reduce watering needs.



### ON HOUSE PLANTS

Sprinkle a thin layer of compost over house-plant soil to provide nutrients. You can also make a great potting soil by mixing one part compost with two parts sand and/or soil.



### DON'T HAVE A GARDEN?

You can still make compost and use it on a house plant, give it to a friend, sprinkle it around a street tree, or use it in a community garden.

## CHOOSE A SYSTEM

### SYSTEM FOR FOOD & YARD TRIMMINGS RODENT-RESISTANT BINS

- For fruit, vegetables & yard trimmings (using "Mixed" compost recipe)
- For yard trimmings alone (using "No-Fuss" recipe)
- Bins require a lid, floor, & no holes bigger than 1/4"



### OPEN PILES & SIMPLE BINS

- For yard trimmings ONLY
- Requires "Active" composting (chopping & weekly turning to keep animals out)
- Usually inexpensive or free



## FOLLOW THE BASICS

Thanks to friendly bugs and worms, composting is as easy as 1 - 2 - 3" - no matter which recipe you use!

- 1 CHOP** materials if you want them to break down more quickly.
- 2 MIX** "browns" (dry, woody materials) with "greens" (moist, green materials).
- 3 MAINTAIN** air & water balance by keeping compost as moist as a wrung-out sponge. Browns, Greens, Air & Water are the "big four" that will keep every compost pile happy.

## "MIXED COMPOST"

For fruit, vegetable & yard trimmings together. This recipe requires a rodent-resistant bin and active maintenance to prevent animal nesting and feeding.

### INGREDIENTS:

Fruit, vegetable and yard trimmings (browns' and greens), water as needed.

### DIRECTIONS:

Feed yard trimmings to your pile as you generate them by chopping them first into pieces 6" or smaller. Food scrapes need to be buried and mixed into the center of the pile. Never dump and run! Be sure to mix in enough browns to balance your greens. Feed as often as you like.



Maintain compost by turning or mixing it about once a week. Keep it moist as a wrung-out sponge.

Harvest rich, brown, finished compost by sifting our coarse, unfinished materials after 3 to 8 months.



## A RECIPE FOR OPEN PILES

### "ACTIVE" COMPOST

For yard trimmings ONLY. In open piles & simple bins, active maintenance prevents animal nesting.

### INGREDIENTS:

Yard trimmings only (browns & greens), water as needed.

### DIRECTIONS:

Feed yard trimmings to your compost by chopping them first into pieces 6" or smaller, then mixing them into the pile. Feed as often as you like. Be sure to balance browns and greens.



Maintain pile by turning or mixing it about once a week. Keep it as moist as a wrung-out sponge. Covering it with a plastic tarp will help keep it moist.

Harvest rich, brown, finished compost by sifting out coarse, unfinished materials after 3 to 8 months.



## COMPOST

- Most saw dust
- Chopped, woody prunings
- Pine needles
- Fallen leaves
- Tea bags
- Citrus rinds
- Coffee grounds & filters
- Lawn clippings & young weeds
- Fruit & vegetable trimmings
- Herbivore manures

## DON'T COMPOST

- Meat, bones or fish
- Dairy products or grease
- Grains, beans or breads
- Dog, cat or bird feces
- Sawdust from plywood or treated wood
- Diseased plants (in cold piles)
- Fruit & vegetable trimmings (in open piles/simple bins)



**Brandt's Sanitary Service**

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*Come visit the Composting Demonstration Site at the Polk County Fairgrounds.*