



Outdoor Home Maintenance

As the seasons change, so do the needs of our lawns, gardens, and other outdoor spaces. Have your outdoor space in tip-top shape with tips from the Alliance for Consumer Education.

- ❑ **Rake Around the Yard** Rake dead leaves and fallen branches before winter for an easier spring cleanup. It also ensures that guests, kids, and pets are not dragging the outdoors in when they come into your home.
- ❑ **Whack the Weeds** Keep weeds away with a spot-spray treatment product. Read the label to find the best product for your yard and to ensure proper use, storage, and disposal.
- ❑ **Plan for Pollen** Breathing in pollen-dense air can cause sneezing, congestion, and an itchy throat. Watch your local weather report for the pollen count. After spending time outdoors, change your clothes, clean your shoes and if you have allergies, consider a quick shower. Don't forget to wipe down window panes and car interiors to remove pollen if you plan on opening your windows.
- ❑ **Rid of Pests** Pests look for a new warm home in fall. An outdoor insecticide or bug trap can keep pests from creeping into your home. Bugs are attracted to food, so be sure to wrap up snacks and leftovers in the kitchen.
- ❑ **Manage Mosquitos** Mosquitos need water to breed. To avoid them, remove standing water around your home, including spare tires, bird baths, and sand boxes. When outside, use a personal insect repellent with ingredients such as DEET or Picaridin—these products effect the receptors in mosquitoes which makes it hard for them to recognize where to land and bite you.
- ❑ **Eliminate Gunk from Gutters** Clear your gutters and downspouts from dead leaves, debris, and pine needles to ensure that they work properly during the upcoming cold, wet months ahead.
- ❑ **Perfect your Patio** During the fall, make sure to wipe down your patio and patio furniture. Disinfect all surfaces following the "spray-wait-wipe" method. Spray the furniture, let the product sit for the recommended amount of time indicated on the label, then wipe clean.
- ❑ **Organize the Garage** Organize and disinfect your summer toys/sporting equipment, landscape equipment, and gardening items in your garage. Pro tip: If there are metal toys in the garage, like trucks and trains, use bleach, in accordance to the dilution instructions, to disinfect toys.

For more tips and advice on creating and maintaining a healthy home, visit healthystartsathome.org.

