

# Spring is here!

## Save your indoor work for a rainy day

Unless you're a snow bunny, the only good thing that most of us can say about winter is that it really makes you appreciate spring.

And despite occasional lapses, spring is here; at least according to the calendar.

And although you may need to do some winterizing work around your home (this winter's utility bills having come as a shock after the previous mild winter), now is not the time.

Now is the time to think Spring.

NOW IS the time to look outside your home for ways to make your yard a place of beauty to spend the lazy days of summer when it is too hot to do anything but loll in the shade.

It is not too early to get your garden going.

Many cool-weather crops such as peas, lettuce, spinach should be in the ground now or very shortly. That way by the Memorial Day weekend you can plant warm-weather crops and relax.

And don't spend the summer weeding either, plan to use lots of mulch such as straw, grass clips, shredded newspapers or even unshredded newspapers (use rocks etc. to keep the wind from blowing them away).

You should be working on your lawn by now and bushes and trees need pruning (check the library or buy a book or two on proper pruning).

THE FOLLOWING pages are devoted mostly to beautifying your yard; to

making it a pleasant place to relax or entertain friends. Included are ideas on building patios, planting shrubs and perennials, installing a bird bath.

In addition, a few articles are included on home repair. But these projects are strictly for rainy days. Spring is too lovely a season to spend cooped up in a house.

Don't spend all your time outdoors working either, take time to watch the birds, study a tulip as it unfolds or just sit and let the sun warm you.

## Attract hummingbirds to your yard by providing sugary treat they love

Hummingbirds, nature's tiny jewel-colored miracles, make fascinating garden guests, and you can attract them by providing the sweet treats they love.

These shining little birds come in vivid colors. Their plumage can range from brilliant scarlet to deep violet, from radiant ruby to emerald green.

Everything about these tiny birds is intriguing, from their colors which change with the light to their hearty appetites. Ortho's new book, "How to Attract Birds," reports that the way to a hummingbird's heart is through his stomach. Provide the food they love, and your garden will soon be home to a hummingbird or two.

In the wild, hummingbirds feed on flower nectar and tiny insects and spiders.

Scientists have determined that the little birds are most attracted to bright red, pink and orange tubular flowers, so plant flowering annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees with blossoms in these colors to bring bright-colored hummingbirds to your garden.

Hummingbirds will also make themselves at home in a garden featuring a

special feeder stocked with sugar water according to the authors of "How to Attract Birds."

**HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS** are available in garden centers. Once you have installed a feeder, decorate it with red plastic flowers or deck it out with red ribbon or tape.

This touch of red will attract the tiny feathered friends on their initial visits. But they will soon learn to return to the feeder if the red decorations are removed or if you move the feeder to a new location in your garden.

Hummingbirds definitely have a sweet tooth, so keep their feeder stocked with sugar water. The recipe is simple: Use one part white granulated sugar to four parts water. Boil the water, add the sugar, stir to dissolve thoroughly and let the solution cool. Fill the feeder and store the unused sugar water in the refrigerator.

Fill the feeders daily and clean them thoroughly every four or five days to prevent mold from forming.

You will find that other feathered friends love this sugar water, including



Nectar from beautiful flowering plants isn't the only thing which attracts hummingbirds to your garden. It's easy to entice hummingbirds to your backyard by keeping a bird feeder stocked with sugar water to satisfy the bird's "sweet tooth."

sparrows, chickadees, finches, nuthatches, orioles and downy woodpeckers.

If you want these additional garden guests, set up some feeders with perches for those birds that eat while perching, and some without perches for hummingbirds who hover as they "dine."

ONCE YOU have attracted hummingbirds to your garden, you may want to learn more about them. They are among the most fascinating birds you can study.

For example, the rufous hummingbird is only 3 1/4 inches long and weighs a featherlight one-ninth of an ounce. Yet this tiny creature breeds as far north as southern Alaska and winters in Mexico — a migration of more than 2,000 miles.

The little birds are like minute helicopters — they can hover, dart, backwards, up, down, in any direction. A hummingbird may beat its wings 75 times a second — no wonder we see a blur instead of wings. Many species do not walk at all — to shift position, a hummingbird will simply rise up an inch or two and alight in a different place.

Remember, plant flowers with nectar or place your hummingbird feeder near the house so you and your family will have a good view of the tiny visitors.

You can bring the little guests even closer to the house with a window box or container sporting plants with a mass of blossoms with nectar, or with a feeder.

## Spring requires the setting of priorities

With the arrival of spring, everything gets topsy-turvy. People peel layers of clothes as the sun warms the air. All the senses are aroused during the spring and the first thing noticed is the immediate surroundings.

The desire to clean everything, "spring fever," comes to the fore after months of unconsciously leaning on walls in the entranceway to remove drippy boots and shoes. The "cozy" atmosphere in the living room and/or den, which developed through the accumulation of books, magazines and reams of newspaper, now seems at least a little cluttered and, perhaps, overwhelming.

For people who do not live in buildings regularly maintained by a superintendent, the interior is the least of the two dilemmas. Many times, more pressing problems like, "How am I going to fix that leaky roof?" or, "Does the house need a new coat of paint?" take priority.

Whether starting on the inside or the outside, one must order priorities of improvements as well as establish budgets.

Often, a specialist is called in to repair a specific problem area, be it the plumbing, roofing or painting.

But, for a variety of reasons, many home improvement jobs are done by "do-it-yourselfers."

**LIMITED FINANCES** and a sense of confidence to do the job quickly and efficaciously prompt homeowners to pick up paint brushes and rollers, remove storm windows and install insulation. Once the outside looks polished, the interior must be spruced up as well. Window shades and blinds are pulled up and curtains drawn to "let the sun shine in."

One major checkpoint is to determine whether the carpet or rug needs to be cleaned; vacuuming doesn't remove deep down build-up.

This is also a good time of year to assess the décor. Should the walls be repainted? Should pictures be hung?

In addition to aesthetics, safety should be another checkpoint. Is there a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, and smoke detectors placed strategically throughout the house?

Do you have a complete supply of basic tools including hammer, screwdrivers, adjustable wrenches, nails, screws, bolts and thumbtacks for emergency repairs? Are there extra fuses or circuit breakers in case of a blow-out?

When spring arrives and extra energy seems to well up inside, why not put that energy into productive home improvement projects?