

# Over the Fence

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

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## Save Money and Improve Air Quality with HVAC Cleaning

(ARA) - Whether in a home or in a commercial building, the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is crucial to ensure a comfortable temperature, fresh airflow, and an overall healthy indoor environment. But over time, these systems can get dirty or damaged, reducing indoor air quality and efficiency, hitting your health and energy bill hard.

### Here's What You Need to Know

- **Filtration Issues:** Low-efficiency filters, lack of a filter replacement program, and improperly sized filters can all allow particles and debris to flow into a home or building. The age of the system is also a factor.
- **Duct Work Contamination:** One of the most underreported problems in HVAC system maintenance is the deterioration of the insulation duct liner. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of HVAC systems installed over 10 years will have some level of insulation deterioration.

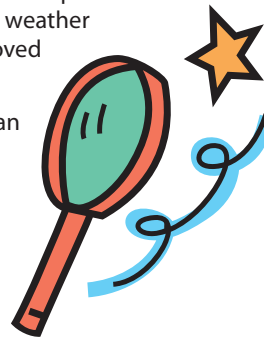
- **Dirty Evaporator Coil:** Over time, evaporator coils become matted with dust and dirt, which insulates the coil and significantly reduces the system's ability to cool the air. This system will work longer and harder and energy costs will increase.

Cleaning your HVAC system will improve indoor air quality, air flow, efficiency and thermal comfort. A proper cleaning includes the elimination of all visible debris and particles from all components of a ventilation system. The National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) has published an internationally recognized standard that specifies requirements for proper cleaning. For more information visit [www.NADCA.com](http://www.NADCA.com).

## May is Deck Safety Month

Your deck is the perfect place to enjoy the warm weather with friends and loved ones.

The North American Deck and Railing Association (NADRA) is dedicated to increasing public awareness of the necessity for regular inspection and maintenance of existing decks and proper installation of new decks. For full article visit the NADRA site: [www.nadra.org/DSM\\_checklist2008.pdf](http://www.nadra.org/DSM_checklist2008.pdf)



### Split or Decaying Wood

- Check several different areas of the deck to be sure the wood is still sound. This includes the ledger board (where the deck attaches to the house and a common source of deck failure), support posts and joists under the deck (if you can reach them), deck boards, railings and stairs.

- Pay special attention to any areas that tend to remain damp or are in contact with fasteners. Use a tool like an ice pick or a screwdriver to penetrate the wood surface. If you can easily penetrate 1/4—1/2 inch, break off a sliver of wood without splinters, or the wood is soft and spongy, decay may be present.

- This is also a good time to look for small holes in the wood, which may indicate insects.

### Stairs

- Check any railings or handrails to be sure they are firmly held in place; check also the risers and stringers to be certain they are securely attached and not decayed.
- If the area behind the stair treads is open, this opening should be no more than 4" high.
- Also, always keep stair pathways clear of planters, décor, toys and other items that can present a tripping hazard.

### Cleaning and Maintenance

- Clean away any leaves and debris, since these can be slippery and promote mildew.
- If mildew is present or the deck coating has worn away, make time to clean and apply a new waterproofing coating. It can help prevent the split, decayed wood and loosened fasteners mentioned earlier.

**National Deck Safety Month**  
**National Salad Month**  
**May 5th:** Cinco de Mayo  
**May 8th:** Mother's Day  
**May 21st:** Armed Forces Day  
**May 30th:** Memorial Day



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**Repair, Replace, Relax** with Fidelity National Home Warranty (FNHW). A home warranty from FNHW provides both the home buyer and seller with “peace of mind” when it comes to repairs and/or replacement of a home’s major systems and appliances. FNHW prides itself on superior customer service, including quick response time and efficient solutions for homeowners’ problems and needs.



*If you are thinking of buying or selling a home in the near future, please call for a personal interview and property assessment with no obligation.*



This is not intended as a solicitation if your property is currently listed with another agent. These materials contain information and articles obtained from third parties. FNHW does not endorse the recommendations of any third party nor guarantee the information provided is complete or correct.

## Going Green this Summer? Quick Tips for Your Landscape, Pool and Spa



### Landscape

- Plant a tree. Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of the energy a typical household uses for cooling.
- Consider water use when replacing the irrigation system—native plants are well adapted to the amount of water your community usually gets and will cut down on overall watering needs.
- Replace outdoor floodlights with compact-fluorescent versions—they’re just as bright and use 1/4 the energy.
- Replace low-wattage halogen landscape bulbs with LED versions. They cut energy use by over 80% and can last for 10 years or more.

- Install motion sensors on any nonessential lights. New versions just screw right into your existing light socket. A typical 100-watt floodlight, used six hours per day, can consume up to \$40 of electricity a year.
- Consider solar-powered outdoor lighting for walks, paths and more.

### Pool and Spa

- Consider a time clock that will give you day-to-day, automatic control over your filter’s and heater’s hours of operation.
- Consider replacing your old pump. Pools are commonly equipped with larger pumps than needed. Replacing an oversized pool pump—even one in good working order—with a smaller, energy-efficient pump is an investment that usually pays for itself in just two to four years.
- Go solar as solar pool heating systems are especially effective during the summer months and can back up a regular pool heater in the spring and the fall. A solar pool heating system can be a significant investment, so make sure the savings have a payback time of less than, or equal to, the useful life of the equipment.

### BLACKBERRY PEAR ASIAN SALAD

Don’t overlook the value that fresh fruit and berries can add to a salad.



#### Ingredients

- 1 package (5 ounces) spring mix lettuce
- 3/4 cup sliced or cubed cucumber
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 ripe pear, cored and cut into 16 thin wedges
- 1 package (6 ounces) blackberries
- 1/4 cup toasted sliced almonds
- 1/4 cup prepared Sesame Ginger Salad Dressing

#### Instructions

Arrange lettuce, cucumber and green onions on four salad plates. Top each with 4 wedges of pear, one quarter of blackberries and 1 tablespoon almonds. Drizzle each salad with 1 tablespoon of dressing.