



Angie's list®

SUMMER MAINTENANCE GUIDE

== OUTDOOR PROJECTS ==

outdoor projects

More and more homeowners are taking the indoors outside, especially during the summer. Whether it's your pool, deck, outdoor kitchen or landscaping, maintaining exterior spaces can help them last during the hot summer sun.

swimming pools

Both above-ground and in-ground pools require similar maintenance tasks when it comes time to [open them for the season](#), including cleaning, filtering and maintaining chemical balance. Experienced pool owners can tackle some of these items themselves (testing the chemical balance for example), but a pool is one of the most expensive purchases a homeowner can make. To protect your investment and ensure it's done right, experts agree that opening a pool for the season is a project best left to the pros.

Costs can vary, depending on the level of work done. Pool professionals say you can pay as little as \$50 for a chemical test and basic cleaning, and up to several hundred dollars for a complete inspection and opening.

fences & decks

Wood fences and decks need routine maintenance to preserve their appearance and structural integrity. [Restoring a fence](#) to its original condition is an ideal DIY project. Carefully power wash the fence, allow it to dry and apply a stain or sealer to return it to its original luster.

[Staining a deck](#) can be more challenging. You'll spend more for the labor, if you hire a professional, but the job will go faster with a crew on site and you'll likely be happier with the results. Plus, a pro can more easily identify and address potential hazards like loose rails or popped nails.



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With proper prep work in the fall and spring, lawns should thrive during the summer months. To keep your grass looking good, be sure not to cut it too short when you mow. Most pros recommend a minimum height of 3 inches.

You may need to [apply fertilizer](#) during the summer, especially if your turf is a warm season grass such as Bermuda, Carpetgrass or St. Augustine. Unsure of what type of grass you have? Check with your county extension office, a qualified lawn care professional, or take a sample of turf to a nearby garden center.

Of course, [proper irrigation](#) is key to nourishing a lawn during the hot summer months.

However, that's not always an option, especially if there's a drought, or when government restrictions limit water use.

In these situations, consider using [conservative watering habits](#) or trading real grass for drought-resistant surfaces, artificial turf or groundcover like *Myoporum parvifolium*. A qualified [lawn care](#) or [landscaping](#) specialist can help you come up with ideas best suited to your lawn conditions.



[CLICK HERE](#) to find lawn irrigation deals from highly rated service providers on Angie's List.



tree care

Like lawns, most trees flourish during the summer. However, large broken branches, cracks in the tree, poor leaf development in the crown and discoloration and separation of the bark are all indicators of a tree that is in trouble. If you notice these signals or see evidence of the [emerald ash borer](#), [Asian longhorned beetle](#) or [other dangerous pests](#), contact a reputable certified arborist to help you determine how to save the tree or if the tree should be removed. To minimize the risk of personal and property damage, tree removal is best left to a professional who is properly licensed and insured.



pest control

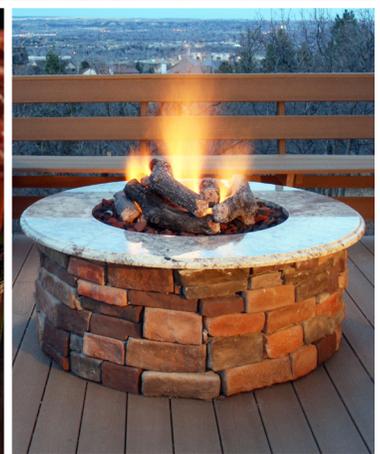
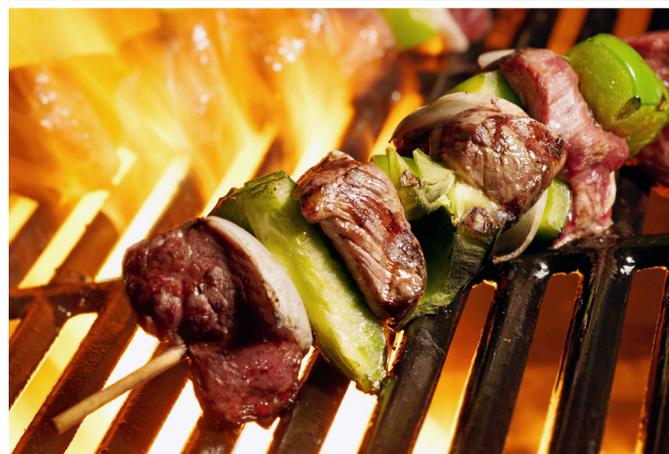
From mosquitoes to ticks to bed bugs, [summer is prime time for pests](#). If bugs are bugging you, a qualified pest control company can address the issue. Preventive programs, designed to regularly treat the outside of the home, can help prevent insects from entering the inside.

OUTDOOR PROJECTS

outdoor lighting

Done well, outdoor lighting offers a number of benefits for homeowners by enhancing curb appeal and extending the time you're able to spend outside, not to mention offering an **additional layer of security**. Done poorly, though, outdoor lights can be an eyesore in more ways than one. They can detract from a property's appearance and contribute to light pollution. For the best results, have a professional install or upgrade your exterior lighting.

Experts add that it's **crucial to have regular maintenance** performed on an outdoor lighting system – typically, twice a year – especially those that use halogen or incandescent bulbs. A single lamp burnout can send too much voltage to other lights on the circuit and cause them to fail prematurely. If adding outdoor lighting, **consider LED bulbs**, which last much longer and use far less energy than halogen and incandescent systems.



outdoor living spaces

Outdoor kitchens and living spaces may not get as much traffic as those indoors, but they are more susceptible to dirt and damage from the weather. **Outdoor living experts advise** that grills are typically the most critical part of any outdoor kitchen, so it's important to clean them after use – ideally while they're still warm – and then cover them once they've cooled to help protect against the elements.

Pros also recommend sealing stone countertops when applicable and pressure washing island façades as part of regular maintenance. If your climate isn't suited to using the kitchen

year-round, be sure to shut off power, gas and water (and drain the lines) when shutting it down for the season.

If you have a **fire pit** or outdoor fireplace, inspect it before and after use. Wood-burning fireplaces can build up creosote and should be professionally cleaned every year or two, depending on use.

Check the structure of wood-burning fire pits to ensure they're sound. With fire pits and fireplaces that use a gas line, have a licensed professional inspect and clean them per the manufacturer's recommendations.

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OUTDOOR PROJECTS



roofs & gutters

Spring storms can wreak havoc on roofs and gutters, so summer is a great time to inspect them for damage. **Sagging gutters**, which can occur because of dirt, debris and water buildup, can lead to serious damage if not corrected. Water can pool and back up into the home. **Check downspouts** to ensure they're not clogged or loose and that water flows freely away from the home.

Experts recommend scheduling a “peace of mind” **roof inspection** every year or two, which offers the ability to catch potential roofing problems before they become bigger. It's also helpful to get a professional estimate of how much useful life your roof might have left. Inspections can range in price from free to \$300, depending on the scope of the job.



driveways

Over time, water and sun can damage both concrete and asphalt driveways, causing pitting and cracks. If your driveway is in need of repair, be sure to talk to a reputable driveway contractor about your options. Minor damage might mean just a **patch job**, **resurfacing** or **resealing**, while more extensive damage may necessitate a **complete replacement**.

Want a more customized appearance? Consider replacing your asphalt or concrete drive with paver or stone for a high-end look.



siding

Homeowners with vinyl siding are likely aware that it can quickly amass dirt, mold and mildew. One common approach to **clean siding** is to power wash it using a cleaning combination of 70 percent water and 30 percent white distilled vinegar, or an over-the-counter product designed for siding.

Be careful not to use too much pressure too close to the siding or you risk causing permanent damage. According to recent Angie's List reviews, professional pressure washing services range from \$275 to \$400.



exterior painting

Painting your house enhances its curb appeal and helps to draw top dollar if you're looking to sell. But **exterior painting** is also an important **preventive maintenance factor**, experts say.

Chimneys, door casings, siding and the fascia board are vulnerable to wood rot over time, so addressing those areas with periodic carpentry repairs and touch-up painting can help protect the interior of the home from potential moisture damage.

The average cost of exterior painting is \$3,737 according to Angie's List reviews.

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