



by  
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*After a long, frozen and snowy winter, everyone is excited to spend time outside, and specifically, homeowners are excited to spend time outside, enjoying the exterior of their home, their outdoor living areas, their gardens, their decks and patios. Although landscaped areas take on a life of their own in growth as we enter March, there are several practical items that should be on anyone's "Spring Checklist" ....*

**The following list of maintenance items is easy to accomplish yourself, or to hire an area professional to help:**

- **Turf** – Green grass is just around the corner – use these easy and inexpensive tips to get your turf in the best shape for the spring.
- **Leaf Clean Up** - If the first snow came too fast, and there were still leaves on the lawn, clean them up as quickly as possible. Leaves left on

the turf over the winter can cause significant damage to the turf in its dormant state.

- **Annual Weed Pre-Emergent** – Did you have crabgrass, foxtail or henbit in your turf last year as the summer went on? If you did, then jump to gun quickly to hire a Professional Lawn Care company to put the proper application of fertilizers in early spring to help reduce weeds.
- **Aeration** – I am personally a fan of doing aeration twice a year – so rent a machine with neighbors in early spring, or hire a professional to plug holes into your lawn – the results are amazing, letting ► *pg. 12*

the air, nutrients and rain get to the feeding source – the roots of your lawn.

- **Landscape Beds** – Flowering shrubs, trees, plants and flowers will begin to emerge in the spring – get your landscape beds ready for a successful and beautiful season.

- **Clean Up** – Leaves in the landscape beds over the winter are somewhat better than on the turf, but now is the time to clean them up. Pay special attention to remove leaves under shrubs, and at the ends of your gutters. Clogged gutters can cause water in your basement with the large spring rains we receive.

- **Annual and Perennial Removal and Cut Back** – If winter hit too fast and you didn't get your annual flowers removed, do it now. Cut back all your perennials, including ornamental grasses. (TIP: Tie a piece of twine around your large ornamental grasses, then cut them – the clean up is amazingly simple!)

- **Weeds** – Pull any remaining, now dead, weeds in your beds – make sure you get the root, which is a lot easier in the wintertime – this will reduce the possibility of the weed returning.

- **Bed Edges** – If you have natural bed edges, use a straight bladed shovel and redefine the edges, cutting a “V” into the soil – this keeps the mulch in, and the grass out. This is easier at the beginning of spring, as the turf is still dormant.

- **Mulching** – Hardwood Mulch protects the plants, and keeps moisture in the soil for proper root watering and moisture retention. It also provides an incredible, immediate aesthetic value. I prefer to mulch landscape beds twice a year... making sure that I don't put too much in the beds – simply for aesthetic and retention.

**Other Maintenance Items**

- **Patios and Walkways** – Make sure there is no salt residue from the long, snowy winter. This will only eat at these beautiful areas. As a professional about applying a sealant to increase color sustainability,

as well as protect the materials. Trust me, the results of some sealants are amazing – they really pull out the original color of the patio, walkway or driveway for immediate aesthetic benefit.



- **Water Features** – Look for stick, twigs, and leaves in the basin before you fill it up. If you couldn't get it winterized before

winter hit, then try to drain it as soon as it becomes unfrozen. Check for leaks, and broken pipes.

- **Lighting** – Grab a cup of decaf coffee and take a stroll through your property after the sun goes down. Are the all the lights coming on? Are they pointed on the right amenity (tree, pathway, deck, etc.)? Are there areas that you'd like additional lighting? You can always replace bulbs yourself, or call lighting professional for help.

- **Irrigation** – Many homeowners turn on their own system in spring, although I recommend having a certified irrigation contractor (some are not licensed or certified, so check credentials in advance) so the system can be checked for leaks and proper coverage.

A small investment of time and effort can help your landscape look beautiful, starting now. Help your lawn, plants and everything outdoors flourish this season. Let's not forget the curb appeal you'll have if you're in the market to sell your home. Now, don't get me wrong, a professional landscape company can do everything on my “Spring Checklist”.

To find a qualified, industry focused, and perhaps certified company, visit [www.landcarenetwork.com](http://www.landcarenetwork.com) and click on “Find a Professional” in the upper right hand corner.

My desire is that this spring means something different to you – as you enjoy our incredible outdoors.

Happy Spring!

*Jason Cupp is a Certified Landscape Professional, and is the 2008 President of the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). He also is the President and CEO of Kansas City Based Design/Build and Maintenance firm Highland Outdoor.*

