

## Inspect Your Trees for Damage



High-wind storms, and in some locales, low temperatures, have wreaked havoc on trees this year.

Spring is the time to inspect trees, especially those growing close to structures and driveways.

Check the roots, the trunk and lower branches first. Pay special attention to those that have lost large branches.

If the roots leading to the trunk have begun to pull out, it could cause the tree to fall with the next storm. Newly exposed roots can mean you might lose the tree, and you'll want to cut it down before it causes damage.

Mushrooms or fungus at the base of the trunk is a sign of dead or decaying roots.

A tight V-shaped fork at the point where two trunks or two large limbs meet increases the likelihood of the tree splitting. Look for cracks.

If the diameter of a large broken limb is more than one-third of the diameter of the tree trunk, or if there are cracks in the trunk, the tree needs professional trimming or might need to be taken down.

Dead or dying limbs have no leaves or brown leaves in the Spring. If more than 25 percent of large branches are dead, the tree won't get well.

With any of these problems, it's time to have that tree removed before it can fall on a person, a pet, a car or a house.



## April Dates

### 1, April Fool's Day

**5, Easter.** The real meaning of Easter is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To Christians, it is the most special day of the year.

**23, Take Your Daughter to Work Day.** Celebrated the 4th Thursday each year. Research showed adolescent girls received less attention than boys, and this day was initiated in 1993 by the Ms. Foundation for Women.

**26, Richter Scale Day** celebrates the birth of the inventor of the Richter Scale. Born on April 26, 1900, American seismologist Charles F. Richter (1900–1985) invented the Richter Scale in 1935.



## Habitual Caffeine Consumption Does Not Cause Afib

Atrial fibrillation, called afib, is the most common type of heartbeat arrhythmia. It occurs when rapid, disorganized electrical signals cause the heart's upper two chambers to contract irregularly.

Contrary to concerns about the caffeine sparking atrial fibrillation, a new analysis shows that this may not be the case. In fact, the pooled analysis found that atrial fibrillation risk fell with increasing caffeine intake.

At the Tufts University HNRCA Cardiovascular laboratory, they say coffee drinkers who experience no heart flutters should be reassured. But as a result of the study, those who don't regularly drink coffee shouldn't start just to prevent afib.

Publishing their analysis in the Canadian Journal of Cardiology, researchers reported that low caffeine intake was associated with an 11 percent lesser risk of developing afib.

Participants grouped as high caffeine drinkers, more than 500 milligrams daily, or about six cups of American coffee, were even less likely (16 percent) to develop afib. With additional regular daily intake of 300 milligrams of caffeine, afib risk declined 6 percent more.

It's not clear why caffeine might help protect against afib. The scientists say one possibility is that caffeine itself is not the protective agent but simply riding along with beneficial phytochemicals found in coffee, tea and cocoa.

They say people should enjoy those beverages, which have been shown to have several health benefits.

## Quotes

*Information goes out.  
Communication gets through.*  
Sydney J. Harris

*If you're looking for the next  
big thing, and you're looking  
where everyone else is, you're  
looking in the wrong place.*  
Mark Cuban

*One characteristic of winners is  
they always look upon  
themselves as a do it  
yourself project.*  
Denis Waitley

*To improve is to change; to be  
perfect is to change often.*  
Winston Churchill

*It's not what you say out of  
your mouth that determines  
your life, it's what you whisper  
to yourself that has  
the most power!*  
Robert T. Kiyosaki

*He that plants trees loves  
others beside himself.*  
Thomas Fuller

## April Is Grilled Cheese Sandwich Month

In North America, the simple grilled cheese sandwich may be a bit of a secret indulgence for calorie counters.

Carb counters, on the other hand, are in luck. The sandwich is a low carb treat, when used with low-carb bread. The simple recipe: Grill bread in butter, allowing processed cheese to melt. That's 12 carbs if you are counting. About 30 carbs if you use regular bread.

Swiss fans put a slice of ham between pre-toasted bread slices then bake covered with a molten lava of broiled Swiss cheese. The French layer thinly-sliced ham with Gruyere on hearty white bread, grilled each side, and then cover the top with Bechamel (white sauce with nutmeg). It bakes until bubbly. They name this tour de force Croque Monsieur (crusty mister).

The English call their version a toastie and prefer their nutty Montgomery cheddar combined with leeks, onions and garlic piled between layers of grilled sourdough.

For our April recipe, let's go Italian! Caprese grilled cheese sandwiches use ripe tomatoes and basil.

### Caprese Grilled Cheese Sandwich

4 slices sourdough or white bread  
6 ounces fresh sliced mozzarella rounds  
8 slices Roma tomatoes  
2 tablespoons chopped, fresh basil ribbons  
Black pepper to taste  
4 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil or  
2 teaspoons butter  
1 clove of garlic

Layer mozzarella rounds over two slices of bread followed by a layer of sliced tomatoes. Sprinkle basil ribbons on top, season with pepper and top with remaining two slices of bread.

Drizzle 2 teaspoons olive oil in a non-stick skillet and heat to smoking point. Add sandwich, or if the bread will toast before the cheese has a chance to melt, butter on tops and bottoms of sandwich. Heat skillet over medium heat. Or, lay a heavy pan over sandwiches and grill about 2 minutes on each side until they are golden brown, and cheese is melted. Lightly brush a garlic clove over toasted sides. Serve immediately.



## What's New for Patio Gardens?

Leading the pack this year are tiny purple eggplants. They look just like the lovely purple veggies, but they are small teardrops, just two or three inches long.

According to Bonnieplants.com, the patio-sized baby mini eggplant taste just like the original. Pop them on a salad or even the frying pan to make little delights.

They need constant sun and moist soil during the growing season. Once you start to pick them, they grow until fall. Pick when the skin is deep purple and glossy for best taste.

Next, the equally purple Indigo Ruby tomato loves containers. These tiny, plum-shaped tomatoes have bright blue/purple tops and red bottoms. The fruit grows in clusters of 4 to 6 on a stem.

This new cherry-type tomato was developed through traditional breeding techniques. These flavorful dazzlers are not only pretty, but also have an extra helping of the antioxidant anthocyanin, a natural ingredient in blueberries.

This variety is available in seed form from Territorial Seed Company and in container form from many major nurseries.

In the flower garden, you'll be seeing lots of mixed colors at your local nursery.

According to HGTV, the New Day Rose Stripe Gazania will be a hit with its luscious purple and cream petals.

## Exercise Has Big Benefits Even If You Don't Lose



Some doctors say the diet industry and popular culture overemphasize weight loss and underemphasize the benefits of exercise for people of any size and weight.

One recent study shows that there are significant health benefits for overweight or obese people being physically active, even if they don't lose a pound. Researchers followed 334,000 Europeans during 12 years. They found twice as many deaths were due to a lack of physical activity than were caused by being overweight.

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition backs up research about the value of exercising for improving health. It found that as little as a brisk, daily 20-minute walk can extend life expectancy.

Greg Degnan is medical director at ACAC, a chain of fitness and wellness centers in Virginia and Pennsylvania that offers medical guidance. He says it's no secret that being significantly overweight increases risks for heart disease and other conditions. "But the medical community has focused too long on diets."

"Exercise can improve blood pressure, lower cholesterol and improve circulation in overweight people. It's also more palatable than slashing calorie content," he says.

Jeanette DePatie, author of *The Fat Chick Works Out*, focuses on exercises she has enjoyed for more than 16 years, including dancing, walking, hiking and yoga. DePatie now teaches dance-based exercise classes three or four days a week. She says she has more stamina than ever, sleeps better, has stable moods and gets sick less often.

When people ask why she exercises if she doesn't lose weight, she tells them: "The last time I was thin was in second grade. I am who I am."

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## Duty Versus Dreams

Back in 1965, a new race driver was about to get his big break, a shot at driving in the Indy 500. It was an opportunity that could have put him on the road to being a superstar. A dream come true.

All he would have to do is risk \$75,000 that his retired father gave him to start a Chevy dealership. The choice was his father's savings or a dream.

He chose his father.

According to USA Today, Roger Penske became a man whose name means racing. But he didn't let his father down. He ran his dealership. He kept his day job.

And in time he started a race team. Today, with revenues of more than \$19 billion Penske can say he did his duty and succeeded. But he sacrificed that Indy car to a guy named Mario Andretti.



## The Lighter Side

### Promoted

The boss called an employee into his office.

"Rob," he said, "you've been with the company for a year. You started off in the mail room, one week later you were promoted to a sales position, and one month after that you were promoted to district manager of the sales department. Just four short months later, you were promoted to vice-chairman.

Now it's time for me to retire, and I want you to take over the company. What do you say to that?"

"Thanks," said Rob.

"Thanks?" the boss replied. "Is that all you can say?"

"I suppose not," Rob said. "Thanks, Dad."

### Psychiatry Seminar

Psychiatry students were attending their first seminar. It was on emotional extremes. The professor wanted to establish some parameters, so he asked what they would say was the opposite of joy.

"Sadness," replied Mr. Nichols.

Ms. Biggs defined the opposite of depression as elation.

"And Mr. Martin, what is the opposite of woe?"

Bubba replied, "I believe that would be giddyup!"



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