

A Week To A Cleaner, Happier Lifestyle

By Deb Paul

Despite recent weather conditions, spring has indeed sprung as of March 20th. The days are officially getting longer, and with any luck, the people of southern New Hampshire will soon be able to retire their winter coats in exchange for light sweaters and flip flops.

These extended hours of daylight will slowly but surely be bringing many a creature from out of hibernation, and no doubt their dens will be left a mess from months of neglect. And while the people of New England haven't had the luxury of sleeping winter away, more than likely most households have put off the bulk of their housework until now, just in time for spring cleaning.

Many people have wondered where the concept of spring cleaning came from, and how to go about getting their homes spring clean, and many more have wondered how to keep them that way. While there haven't been any technological breakthroughs in the way of self-cleaning homes just yet, understanding the origin of the "spring clean" and learning how to let go might help make future annual de-cluttering more enjoyable.

According to Britannica.com, spring cleaning comes from the distant past when homes were heated with coal, oil, and wood. In these days, despite homeowners' best efforts to keep clean in the winter months, ash and other debris would accumulate in hard-to-reach places, so when the outside conditions became more favorable, families would move their furniture, rugs, and other household items outside. From there, they sweep and scrub every area of the home that had been disregarded for the past few months, from floors and walls to linens and books, cleaning out months worth of dirt and grime. Once the interior was clean, members of the household would clean off the dressers, couches, and other items that were left outside and move them back to their original places, and enjoy their new, clean surroundings until they needed to rinse and repeat in the following years.

This time of year is associated with deep cleaning to this day, and there has even been a good several days dedicated to the Spring Equinox tidyup.

Most sources for home care suggest that the best way to achieving a clean home in seven days is to

clean one room per day. For example, on Sunday, start with the kitchen, deep cleaning surfaces, cleaning behind the refrigerator, etc. Then the next day, tackle the bathroom, deep cleaning the tub, organizing medicine cabinets, etc. Creating a spring cleaning checklist with detailed items to be taken care of annually can help organize and simplify the process, and the burden need not be on one person.

Children old enough to clean up after themselves can tackle their own rooms. Old toys and clothes that haven't been played with or worn more than once in several months, or anything they have grown out of, can be gathered to take to a consignment shop or donate to a thrift shop, and parents can follow suit by giving away any suits or other items that haven't been used all winter.

Most churches have collection bins available for donations, and local consignment shops often accept gently used toys, clothes, and other items. Clothes that are worn to the point that they cannot be recirculated can be dropped off at textile recycling bins to be repurposed into any number of articles of clothing.

Donating to and purchasing from consignment shops and thrift stores helps reduce waste, as clothes, toys, and household items can be reused by any number of families that might not be able to afford to pay retail price for any of those items. Therefore, they don't have to take up space in a landfill for the sake of no longer taking up space in their original home.

Having incentive to following through with and completing a full spring clean is helpful. Planning a family getaway that can only be done once certain cleaning goals are reached is a great way to ensure that tasks are done correctly. Having a yard sale to get rid of excess items, with funds going toward big ticket items such as bicycles, is a fun way to reduce clutter. Above all, having a nice, clean home at the end of just one week is perhaps the greatest prize for a job well done.

The last of the winter snow will (hopefully) soon be behind southern New Hampshire, and spring will bring plenty of spring cleaning inspiration in the form of songbirds and flowers.



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Be A Neighbor, Help A Neighbor

Loneliness, social isolation, and anxiety over what used to be simple tasks is permeating the homes of seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans and military family members throughout the Monadnock Region.

Just one to two hours a week can provide a life line to an individual who is trying to remain living independently. The Monadnock RSVP Volunteer Center's Neighbors-In-Deed program is looking for volunteers to provide assistance and companionship to those in our community who are struggling to stay in their homes. Regular ongoing assignment work and part time handymen and drivers are needed.

To learn more about the program and to see the profiles of some of those looking for help, visit MonadnockVolunteerCenter.com.

For more details or to talk with the program coordinator, email Jazmin Belcoure at jbelcoure@mfs.org, or call 603-357-6893.

Round Up Your Change For The Monadnock Conservancy At Monadnock Food Co-op In March

The Monadnock Food Co-op month-long Round It Up Donation Drive to benefit the Monadnock Conservancy has begun for the month of March. The Monadnock Conservancy's mission is to work with communities and landowners to conserve the natural resources, wild and working lands, rural character, and scenic beauty of the Monadnock Region.

The money raised through the co-op's Round It Up Program will help Monadnock Conservancy continue to protect and steward land that contributes to ecological health, conserve agricultural lands, connect people and the land, and facilitate informed land use decision-making.

"Ever since the co-op opened in Keene, they have been a natural partner and ally in championing this region's local food, farms, and farmland," said Monadnock Conservancy Executive Director, Ryan Owens. "We're so grateful that the conservancy has been again selected as a Round It Up recipient. The money raised will go towards protecting more land and ensuring that farming can always be an important part of our community."

For more details about Monadnock Conservancy visit www.monadnockconservancy.org.

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