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## Why Is Gutter Cleaning So Important?

Gutters are an integral piece of your home's well-being. They serve to control the flow of rainwater to protect your roof, walls, foundation and landscape. A debris-clogged gutter can cause a leaky roof or water damage to the interior or exterior of your home.

Even flooded basements and cracking foundations are other symptoms of clogged gutters. If water isn't drained away from the house and it pools around the foundation it will expand when frozen and cause cracks which lead to floods in your basement or crawl space.

When neglected, experts say gutters can turn from a necessity to a nightmare. A gutter clogged with leaves, sticks and other debris can cause major damage. Contractors say gunked-up gutters also make nice homes for pests, rodents, mold and honeycombs from bee infestations. If you let gutter cleaning go by the wayside, it can cost you hundreds or thousands of dollars.

### How often should they be cleaned?

It depends largely on how many trees are in your area. Also in the springtime, maple trees get those little helicopters that go

everywhere, including into your gutter. It is recommended cleaning gutters 3-4 times a year.

Don't forget to check and clean out all the downspouts, extensions and splash blocks. Run water through to make sure it runs down properly or if it is raining walk around your house.

### Gutter covers reduce debris.

Leaf guards significantly decrease the need for gutter maintenance, but they don't eliminate the need completely. Instead of every 4 to 6 months, you may only need to clean gutters with covers or screens every 1 to 3 years. The frequency of maintenance will depend on the quality of the cover and the type and quantity of trees in the yard.

Although cleaning gutters is a task most homeowners can do themselves, it can be dangerous work. Before climbing a ladder, be sure it's sturdy and all the steps are in good condition. For soft soil, place plywood under the legs of the ladder. You should also make sure not to rest the ladder on the gutters themselves because the additional weight can cause them to collapse.

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## Strawberry Pretzel Salad



### Ingredients

- 2 cups crushed pretzels
- 3/4 cup butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 (6 ounce) package strawberry jello
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 (10 ounce) packages frozen strawberries, thawed
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 (8 ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Melt butter. Mix in 3T sugar and pretzels. Press mixture into the bottom of one 9x13 inch baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.
3. In a large bowl beat the cream cheese and white sugar together until smooth. Fold in the whipped cream. Spread onto cooled crust.
4. In a medium bowl, dissolve the gelatin in the boiling water and stir in the strawberries. Chill until partially thickened. Pour over top and chill until firm.

## APRIL FOOL'S DAY WORD SEARCH

(find the hidden words)

Y L L I S B P E L Z O O B M A B  
 E B E W I L D E R C A P E R W Q  
 E A S H E N A N I G A N S B U P  
 F R E S I R P R U S G U O D R E  
 A E T U P S L B S E K O J E E E  
 R D T O N D U P E H U F P T K L  
 C U S I M S C L M F D O R Y A A  
 E L E O I F D P E N S I Y U Y Y  
 A E J N I D O I U T C T G E K L  
 E D E R U P H O E K I H K C I X  
 F S S F R C F R L V T R A R V A  
 S T E A S B O D E E A W P M X O  
 E B N I M U A L R L R A D F Z H  
 Y K M U S E Y P A O B Y O R J R  
 R R D T C O U M I T E S U M E B  
 E Y E K N O M K N I W D O O H I

APRIL	DUMFOUND	JOKES	PREPOSTEROUS
BAMBOOZLE	DUPE	LAUGHTER	SHENANIGANS
BEFUDDLE	FARCE	LEVITY	SILLY
BEMUSE	FIRST	MISCHIEF	SURPRISE
BEWILDER	HOAX	MONKEY	TOMFOOLERY
CAPER	HOODWINK	BUSINESS	TRICK
DELUDE	JEST	PRANK	WACKY

If you would like the answers to this puzzle email [cgillespie@duraclean.com](mailto:cgillespie@duraclean.com)

## Surprising Things You Can Clean in the Washing Machine

By now, we all know that our washing machines can be used for so much more than washing clothes — think sneakers, bedding and even baseball hats. But did you know this magical cleaning machine is capable of so much more?

### Shower Curtains



Do you replace your shower liners every month or so when they start to show soap scum. Just throw them in the washer with a few bath towels and wash on cold with regular laundry detergent. Just hang back up to dry. They come out looking good as new.

### Yoga Mat



Unless the care label says otherwise, most yoga mats can be cleaned on the delicate cycle with no detergent and tossed in the dryer on medium heat.

### Car Mats



Those cloth floor mats in your car are totally machine-washable. If they're extra dirty or spotted with spill stains, spray the soiled areas with a little stain remover before washing on warm with your normal detergent and hanging to dry. Try not to do this more than once every few months, however, as the rubber backing could start to deteriorate from too many spin cycles.

### Shower Mat



When your non-slip mat starts to look yucky, run it through the regular cycle with a few towels (these add extra scrubbing power) and a small amount of your normal detergent.

### Soft Side Lunch Box/Cooler



As always, check your care labels, but most insulated lunch boxes and coolers are totally fine to clean in the washing machine. Throw in with a few towels on cold, then hang upside-down with the zipper open to dry.

## April Fool's Day Famous Pranks

**The Rickrolling heard around the world:** Riffing off one of the most well-known YouTube pranks ever, the video sharing site took advantage of April Fools' Day 2008 by linking all the featured videos on its homepage to Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up" 1987 music video — a practice commonly referred to as *Rickrolling*.

**John Stamos' Netflix freakout:** Netflix took celebrity pranking to a whole new level in 2016 by first releasing a fake trailer for a biopic documentary about the man, the myth, the legend that is John Stamos before "leaking" a video of the actor unleashing his anger over the gag at the company's office. Of course, it turned out Stamos was in on the whole thing.

**Katie Couric takes a tumble:** James Corden may be one of the kings of late night comedy but even he fell for Katie Couric's fake fall down the *Late Late Show* stairs. Although most of the credit should probably go to Couric's stunt double for pulling off that vicious-looking spill.

**Google and Amazon tease us with products we wish existed.** On April Fools' Day 2017 Google announced the new Google Gnome, a sassy version of Google Home meant for the backyard. Following suit, Amazon advertised Petlexa, an Alexa Echo for your pets. "Petlexa is here! Now your dog, cat, or favorite pet can communicate with Alexa just like you do."

## Why Spring Is the Perfect Time to Take Your Workout Outdoors



When the weather thaws, the plants bloom and the days get longer, it's spring—and the best time of the year to take your fitness regimen outside. Here are some perks of *al fresco* exercise.

### You work harder.

When people exercise outside, they tend to spend more time doing it. One study found that older people who were active outdoors did at least 30 minutes more moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week than those who only did it inside.

### Being in nature lowers blood pressure.

Spending time outside is also good for the heart. It is estimated that nearly 10% of people with high blood pressure could get their levels under control if they spent at least 30 minutes in a park each week.

### It can feel more fun.

When people exercise outside, they feel better and enjoy the exercise more. Exercising outside is also a great alternative for those who don't want to go to the gym.

### Your mental health may improve.

Nature has a way of making people feel calm, and exercising outside can strengthen that effect. A small 2015 study found that people who walked for 90 minutes outside were less likely to ruminate on their problems and had less activity in the brain area linked to depression, compared to people who took similar walks but in urban areas.

### You save money.

Exercising outdoors is not only convenient, but it's less expensive than a gym membership, it's free.