



Better Home Living

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Caring for Leather Furniture

Last year, leather accounted for 26 percent of all furniture upholstery in the U.S. But owning leather furniture requires regular care to maintain its beauty. Here's what to do.

- * Don't place it in direct sunlight or too close to a heat source. Excess heat can dry and discolor it.
- * Clean and condition twice yearly using a leather cleaner followed by a leather balm to replenish moisture.
- * Dust with a soft, dry cloth and vacuum seams and crevices.
- * For minor scratches, use a chamois or clean finger and gently buff. For deeper marks, apply a conditioner. Never use a pen or shoe dye.
- * For minor spills, wipe up liquid immediately and use a lightly moistened cloth with lukewarm water. Let it air dry.
- * For grease stains, wipe with a dry cloth. Leave them alone and they may blend into the leather.
- * Do not use cleaning solvents, furniture polish, oils, varnish, abrasive cleaners, detergents, or ammonia.

Caring for Wicker Furniture

True wicker is made of rattan, reed, willow, and bamboo. It should be kept away from direct sunlight and excessive heat. Both will dry it out, making it become brittle and cracked. Too much dampness can cause mildew.

To clean wicker, vacuum it thoroughly and use a brush attachment to remove dirt and dust. Then scrub with a soft-bristle brush dampened with mild soap and water. Work carefully to get between crevices to remove collected dirt. Following a good cleaning, let the furniture dry completely.

If it has chips or scratches in the paint, sand lightly with very fine sandpaper. Wipe the surface with mineral spirits, then apply two coats of quality paint. Regular care includes dusting with a feather duster. To avoid its drying out, dampen it once a month with a fine mist of water from a spray bottle.

For RV, Camping, and Tailgating Safety: How to Pick a Generator for Outdoor Adventures

Recreational generators can supply power to the most remote places on Earth, including most campsites.

In the past, they've had a bad rap because of their noise levels. Not anymore. New generators use inverter technology, which makes them far quieter.

You can use an older emergency generator at your campsite; but the current won't be clean enough for electronics like cell phones or laptops, and the noise they produce is aggravating.

Inverter Generators

Ideal for outdoor adventures such as camping, boating, and tailgating, the new inverter generators are extra quiet because they utilize a unique type of alternator to generate very clean AC power. They are also smaller and weigh less. Equally as important, the engine can run at varying speeds, significantly reducing fuel consumption and any noise they might generate.

RV Generators

Mike Sawisch, a product expert at Electric Generator Direct, says RV generators are designed to meet the high-powered demands of recreational vehicle appliances like air conditioning units, refrigerators and TVs.

They cost a little more than other portable generators, but it's worth it to have the power you need.



We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

Mari & Staff

The Honey Bee Problem: Are they disappearing?

Suddenly the little creature we have wanted to avoid all this time, is the very one we are most concerned about: Honey Bees.

Are they going to go extinct, another victim of industrialization?

That depends who you ask.

Nearly every authority agrees that Colony Collapse Disorder has occurred throughout history. Bee researchers Robyn Underwood and Dennis van Engelsdorp have isolated more than 25 major bee die offs between 1868 and 2003. In the winter of 2012 and 2013, the US Agriculture Department recorded a 31 percent loss in managed bee colonies. CCD cases spiked in 2006 with beekeepers losing 30 percent to 90 percent of bees in hive.

But are bees going extinct? According to Time magazine, the number of managed honeybee colonies in the U.S. has remained stable for 15 years at about 1.5 million hives. Bees are thriving in Canada, Africa, Australia, and Asia.

Still, in 1946 there were 5.8 million U.S. hives. Why the difference?

Fewer beekeepers for one.

Environmentalists argue the neonicotinoid pesticides are largely to blame and some countries have banned the pesticide.

The parasitic Varro Destructor mite has infected bee colonies for the last 30 years.

And there are enemies to hives like bacteria, beetles, diseases, infections and a parasitic fly.

One problem might be the millions of acres planted in corn. For bees this is desert area with no pollen and nectar.

Scientists believe they are closing in on the factors affecting U.S. bee colonies.

... Someone that could use our services? Perhaps a friend, family member, co-worker, or someone from church?

When a new client signs up for regular cleaning services at your recommendation; you will receive \$50 off your cleaning after their 3rd cleaning!

If you would think of 3 or 4 people that could use our services, then don't hesitate to call them and give them our name and phone number. Be sure to have them mention your name when they call so we can send your Bonus!

The ladies on Mari's "clean team" are friendly and professional. I will only use this company for my cleaning needs. They go above and beyond my expectations and I am always thrilled after they leave seeing my sparkling home!

Doris Jean

Phoenix

Achy knees? Osteoarthritis setting in? It's Time to Stand More and Sit Less

Osteoarthritis (OA) in the joints can make movement more difficult, but movement is just what you need to prevent it or keep it at bay.

Knees are the most common joint affected in more than 9 million OA people. The study, published in the American Journal of Public Health, shows that the more time you spend sitting around, like you do in the evening when watching television, the greater the loss of physical function you'll have over the next two years.

Their test subjects were aged 49 and above who had some form of knee OA. Their daily activity was monitored with an electronic device.

Gait speed and chair-stand testing measured mobility. Gait speed determined how fast a person walked 66 feet (20 meters). The chair-stand test showed how often they could rise to a standing position in one minute.

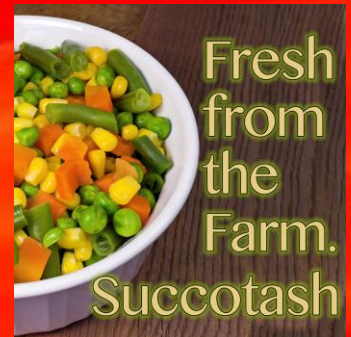
The group that spent about two-thirds of its waking hours in the chair, about 9.8 hours on average, were lower in both tests. It didn't matter if they were active during the day. That didn't overcome the long periods of sitting.

Get out of your chair frequently in the evening. Serve refreshments, clean up, talk on the phone while standing. Use some exercise equipment, walk the dog, or just stroll about while getting ready for bed, but get up frequently.

Farm-Fresh Summer Succotash

Since the first week of August is National Farmers Market Week, and you spent a good half-day drooling over the plethora of seasonal choices while chatting with the local farmers and other shoppers, your kitchen is stocked with a week's worth of ultra-fresh, locally grown vegetables.

It's the height of summer, and outdoor dining is still your family's favorite. No one minds one more meal of BBQ ribs, burgers or chicken.



But the star of the meal can be a side dish that features vibrantly colored, just-picked ingredients from the market.

How about cooking something that's colorful, crunchy, and creative? And most of all, easy, quick and so delicious, it will earn you a high-five. Oh, and you might mention that the succotash is healthy and low-calorie.

Farm-Fresh Summer Succotash

- 3 cups fresh corn kernels (4 ears)
- 1 cup zucchini, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup diced yellow or red onion
- 1 cup fresh green beans, blanched and cut in half-inch pieces
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- Butter (for sautéing)

Instructions

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, sauté onion in butter about 2 minutes.

Add chopped zucchini and sauté 3 minutes.

Stir in corn, green beans and tomatoes.

Add basil, cilantro, salt and pepper.

Heat until mixture is hot.

That's it! Total time is a mere 20 minutes. Serve it from the skillet and keep it hot on a corner of the grill for second servings.

Trivia Teaser – Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

1. Who is the bald nemesis of Superman? a-Professor X, b-Mister Mind, c-The Toyman, d-Lex Luthor.

2. What composer's "Night on Bald Mountain" is featured in the Disney movie "Fantasia"? a-Modest Mussorgsky, b-Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, c-Ralph Vaughan Williams, d-Sergei Prokofiev.

3. How many arrows are clutched in the left talon of the bald eagle depicted on the \$1 bill? a-6, b-13, c-48, d-50.

4. What is the last name of the bald millionaire who adopted Little Orphan Annie? a-Warbucks, b-Barks, c-Picard, d-Andrews.

5. What bald kid was a friend of comic strip character "Nancy"? a-Alfalfa, b-Sluggo, c-Henry, d-Wimpy.

6. "I don't want to end up dead or bald" was a lament heard in what top 40 novelty song? a-"Tennessee Bird Walk," b-"King of the Road," c-"Mr. Custer," d-"Dead Skunk."

7. Charles the Fat, Charles the Simple, and Charles the Bald were rulers of which country? a-The Netherlands, b-England, c-Greece, d-France.

8. The genus name of what bird comes from Latinized Ancient Greek for "bald" and "raven"? a-Albatross, b-Ostrich, c-Kookaburra, d-Cormorant.

9. Which NFL quarterback was nicknamed "Bald Eagle"? a-Y.A. Tittle, b-Fran Tarkenton, c-Norm Van Brocklin, d-Bobby Layne.

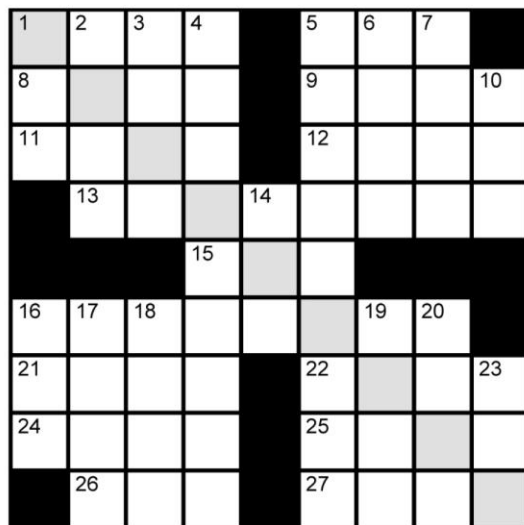
10. What actress shaved her head for the lead role in the 1997 action film "G.I. Jane"? a-Charlize Theron, b-Anne Hathaway, c-Demi Moore, d-Milla Jovovich.

Answers to 'Hair Today Gone Tomorrow'
1-d, Lex Luthor
2-a, Modest Mussorgsky
3-c, 13
4-a, Warbucks
5-b, Sluggo
6-c, "Mr. Custer"
7-d, France
8-d, Cormorant
9-a, Y.A. Tittle
10-c, Demi Moore

Health plan

Across

1. Blockheads
5. Bungle
8. With competence
9. Fencing sword
11. Mets, Jets or Nets
12. Supper, e.g.
13. Ear membrane
15. "Mangia!"
16. Two-paneled paintings
21. Aroma
22. Chance occurrences
24. 18-wheeler
25. Brown shade
26. "Hold on a ___!"
27. ___ terrier

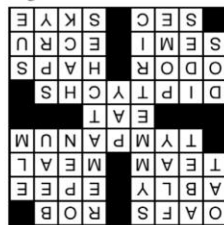


Down

1. Cheerios grain
2. Assist, in a way
3. Scold severely
4. Having similarity in size, shape and position
5. Meeting an opponent again (pl.)
6. Ready for business

7. Actor Bridges
10. Blight victim
14. Foot the bill
16. Old PC platform
17. Midmonth date
18. Fleshy fruit
19. Mediocre writer
20. Active
23. "So ___ me!"

The title is a clue to the word in the shaded diagonal.



Haboobs in Arizona

Haboobs typically occur when strong winds rushing out from an area of showers and thunderstorms picks up desert dust and pushes it forward, out ahead of the actual rain from the storm. The name haboob stems from the Arabic word for wind, as the storms are common in desert areas of the Middle East.

This is the typical time of year when haboobs occur in the Southwest, as moisture moves northeastward from Gulf of California, leading to scattered showers and thunderstorms. The storms reportedly knocked out power to around 8,000 residents across the area. Delays were also reported at Phoenix's Sky Harbor International Airport as visibility was reduced to near zero.

NHTSA says now does a lot of Dangerous things, but ... Surprise... the Deadliest Driving Weather is Rain

A new analysis of federal data shows that rain causes more driving fatalities than snow in 39 of the 50 states.

The Auto Insurance Center compiled the report from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data. The analysis finds that drivers are often less cautious in rain than in winter conditions.

There is no breakdown of the various types of rain. If there were, it would include the misty drizzle that clouds over the windshield before you turn on the wipers and defrosters.

The pitter patter of normal rainfall makes it harder to concentrate on driving, especially if someone is talking to you. Then there are the genuine storms that make you decide whether or not to join others who have pulled off the road.

The aftermath of a heavy, concentrated rain on the road or highway can cause your car to hydroplane, making it very difficult or impossible to steer or stop.

Flooded underpasses are a perennial problem. Even when drivers see the underpass is flooded, they might expect to make it through if they drive the area a lot. Drivers can't tell how deep an area of water on a road may be or whether the road underneath it has been washed away. In actual flooding situations, a car may be swept away by rushing water.

What's more, these conditions and hazards can occur in all 50 states. Yes, the deadliest driving weather is rain, but in that category there's a lot to consider.

The insurance center report reminds us that far more people are killed as a result of reckless driving, speeding and drunken driving. But rain and its aftermath can still be very dangerous.

In North Dakota, for example, snow and rain caused an equal number of fatal crashes last year.

You also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ **Romans 1:6**

Asian Noodles with Summer Vegetables



Ingredients

Kosher salt
12 ounces whole-wheat spaghetti
12 ounces sugar snap peas, trimmed and halved
3 heads baby bok choy, trimmed and roughly chopped
1/3 cup cashew butter or peanut butter
3 tablespoons rice vinegar
1 tablespoon Sriracha (Asian chile sauce), plus more for serving
4 scallions, roughly chopped
1 1/2 -inch piece ginger, peeled and sliced
1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves
1 small yellow, red or orange bell pepper, diced
8 radishes, diced

Directions

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook as the label directs, adding the snap peas and bok choy during the last 2 minutes. Reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking water, then drain. Transfer the pasta and vegetables to a large bowl.

Meanwhile, pulse the cashew butter, 2 tablespoons each water and rice vinegar, the Sriracha, scallions, ginger, 1/4 cup cilantro and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a food processor until smooth. Toss the bell pepper and radishes in a medium bowl with the remaining 1/4 cup cilantro and 1 tablespoon rice vinegar.

Add the sauce to the pasta mixture along with enough of the reserved pasta cooking water to loosen; toss to coat. Top each serving with the diced vegetables and some Sriracha.