



October 9, 2010

FALL HOME AND GARDEN CHECKLIST

BY DEBBIE ARRINGTON
McClatchy Newspapers

IN THE GARDEN:

Pull out the summer garden and get started on cool-weather vegetables and flowers.

Now is the time to plant seeds for many flowers directly into the garden, including cornflower, nasturtium, nigella, poppy, portulaca and sweet pea.

In the vegetable garden, seed bok choy, mustard, spinach, radishes and peas. Plant garlic and onion sets. Set out cool-weather bedding plants including calendula, pansy, snapdragon, primrose and viola.

AROUND THE HOUSE:

It's time to get alarmed.

This is National Fire Prevention Week. According to a new survey, most American homes don't have enough smoke or carbon monoxide detectors.

About two-thirds of homes don't meet the national recommendation for the number of smoke alarms set by the National Fire Protection Association, said the nationwide survey conducted by First Alert. Only one in 10 homes meets the recommendations for carbon monoxide monitors.

The association recommends at

least one carbon monoxide alarm on each level of a house and one in or near every bedroom or sleeping area. For smoke alarms, one should be installed at the top of each staircase, and one in every bedroom or sleeping area, under the guidelines. For an average two-story, three-bedroom house, that adds up to four smoke alarms and five carbon monoxide alarms. (For details, see NFPA.ORG.)

Need more reasons to get fired up? According to the U.S. Fire Administration, 84 percent of all civilian fire deaths occur at private residences. Each year, nearly 3,000 Americans die in home fires and about 450 succumb to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Experts recommend installing smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors and checking the batteries once a month to make sure they work.

Protection One, another home-security company, recommends that families practice fire drills so they know what to do when the alarm goes off. Devise an escape plan, and post it where it's visible at all times.

For more tips and a home safety checklist, click on FIRSTALERT.COM/SAFETY_CHECKLIST.PHP.