

Digging this spring? Call 811 before breaking ground

April is National Safe Digging Month

Spring projects are underway across Kentucky and Virginia, but before homeowners or contractors pick up a shovel, Louisville Gas and Electric Company and Kentucky Utilities Company urge them to take one critical step: contact 811 to have underground utilities marked. April

is National Safe Digging Month, a reminder that calling 811 before digging is essential for safety, service reliability and legal compliance. Digging without knowing what's beneath the surface can lead to serious consequences. Striking an underground utility line can result in costly repairs, service outages, fines, and potentially severe injuries or fatalities. By contacting 811, property owners and contractors can have trained professionals mark the approximate locations of underground utility lines—free of charge—before any digging begins. “Whether the project

is large or as simple as planting a bush or installing a mailbox post, calling 811 before digging helps protect lives, property and critical infrastructure,” said Tom Rieth, Vice President of Gas Operations. **How 811 Works** Submitting a locate request is easy and required by law. Once a project is planned, residents must submit a request at least two full business days before digging begins, excluding the day the request is made. • Kentucky residents: Visit kentucky811.org or dial 8-1-1 • Virginia resi-

dents: Visit va811.com or dial 8-1-1 After a request is submitted, 811 notifies member utilities—such as natural gas, electric, telephone, cable, water and sewer providers—to mark the approximate locations of their underground lines using color-coded flags or paint. For accuracy, homeowners are encouraged to mark the proposed digging area with white paint prior to locating. **Update for KU Customers** Beginning January 1, 2026, all KU customers and excavators working within KU's service territory—in all

77 counties served by KU—can contact Kentucky 811 to have underground electric lines marked before digging. This update eliminates the need for some customers and contractors to contact KU directly, streamlining the process statewide. **Positive Response and Digging Safely** Before digging begins, all utilities listed on the locate request must provide a “positive response,” confirming that lines have been marked or that no underground facilities are present. These responses are communicated via email or on-

line portal notification. Even after receiving clearance, digging must be done with care. Utility lines do not always run in straight paths, and their depth can vary. The tolerance zone includes the width of the underground utility plus an additional 24 inches on each side. Digging directly on marked lines is prohibited. If excavation is required within the tolerance zone, only hand tools or other non-intrusive methods may be used. For additional information about safe digging practices, visit lge-ku.com/811.

Protect dogs against Lyme disease

Lyme disease is not exclusive to human beings. Dogs are susceptible to this significant vector-borne threat as well. Caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*, Lyme disease can lead to debilitating joint pain, lethargy and even life-threatening kidney failure in extreme cases. It behooves pet parents to safeguard their animals from Lyme disease.

The American Veterinary Medical Association says Lyme disease is primarily transmitted through the blacklegged tick, commonly called the deer tick. As tick populations expand due to shifting climates, Lyme disease is no longer localized to the Northeast. In 2024, the Companion Animal Parasite Council found 7 percent of dogs tested in Wisconsin and more than 10 percent of dogs in parts of New England tested positive for Lyme antibodies. Tick-borne illnesses are on the rise even in historically low-risk areas like California. Pet owners can

Signs of Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is a serious tick-borne illness that can affect your pet's health. Watch for these common signs:

- Limping or lameness that shifts between legs
- Swollen joints or stiffness
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Swollen lymph nodes

Contact your vet if your pet experiences any of these symptoms.

take several steps to protect a dog from Lyme disease. • Maintain flea and tick prevention all year long. Ticks are showing up in areas where they weren't always found and in months when people thought they were dormant. It's essential for pets to be protected with repellants and tick preventatives all year long. These defenses can be purchased as chewables, topicals and specialized col-

lars. According to the AVMA, a tick typically must be attached for 24 to 48 hours to transmit the Lyme bacteria. Preventatives aim to eliminate the tick within this window. • Consider vaccinating the dog. Dogs that live in areas with high tick concentrations could probably benefit from receiving the Lyme vaccine. The efficacy can vary between 60 and 90 percent, but the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine notes that vaccinated dogs who do get Lyme disease often experience less severe symptoms. • Keep the yard tidy. Ticks thrive in tall grass, leaf litter and wooded areas. Homeowners can keep their lawns short to eliminate the moist, shaded environments that ticks like. They also should



clear leaf debris and brush from the yard. • Conduct a visual inspection. After time outdoors, it's important for pet owners to check their dogs for ticks and remove any they find. Attention should be paid to the ears, eyelids, under the collar, between the toes, and under the tail. • Avoid walks in wooded areas. When walking dogs in parks and other areas with a lot of trees, it's important to stick to the trails and keep the pets out of the brush where ticks are bound to be lurking, especially during peak times when ticks are active. The New York State Department of Health says ticks are most active from March to mid-May, and then mid-August to November. Protecting a dog from ticks and Lyme disease requires diligence and continuity.

Color between bloom times



There is often a lull between the gorgeous shows of color throughout the year in your landscape or flower garden. To capture year-round interest, you can plan for a continuous bloom cycle. One way to achieve a continuous bloom cycle is to research when plants bloom. Many plant tags will identify this information for you. You have early spring, late spring, early summer, late summer, and fall blooming plants. For example, if you are trying to achieve hues of purple you could start out with hyacinths, then phlox, followed by oxalis and bee balm,

and finish with hardy garden mums in the fall. If you still find a gap in the color show, consider buying a few flats of annuals to plant in suitable areas within the flower garden. Begonias do well for this task. Pinch them back regularly to encourage more branching and more blooms. You can also direct seed later blooming flowers after the last chance of frost in the spring. Some good hardy options are marigolds, zinnias, hollyhocks, etc. Turn your landscape or flower garden into a hobby instead of a task. Everything doesn't have to be done in one season. Take your time, find plants you like. This method can save you money in the long run and let you find the perfect plants for your space. Have fun!

YOUR HEALTH, OUR PRIORITY

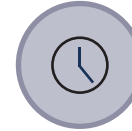
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