



The Green Door

October 2004

The Green Door is a monthly newsletter of sustainable living and real estate geared to present and future homeowners.

"There are no Passengers on Spaceship Earth, We are all Crew." - Marshall McLuhan

Preparing For Winter-Sustainable Stewardship

Long range meteorological forecasts, and even The Farmer's Almanac, predict a return to cold winter weather patterns in most of the U.S. this winter, with temperatures 10 to 20 degrees lower than last winter. El Nino is also about, so this winter may be somewhat drier, but still wet in Seattle. Along with record oil prices, the U.S. Dept of Energy has predicted a 45-percent increase in home heating oil prices, a 19-percent increase for natural gas, and a 22-percent increase in the price of propane.

An important concept for energy efficiency in buildings is the building envelope, which is everything that separates the interior of the building from the outdoor environment: the doors, windows, walls, foundation, roof, and insulation. All these components must work together in order to keep a building warm in winter and cool in the summer.

Weatherproofing Recommendations

1. Inspect your roofing-it is essential protection to the rest of our housing investment in this rainy Seattle environment. Look for lost or curling shingles, broken tiles, asphalt shingles losing their granular layer and excessive moss. Also inspect roof from inside attic looking for water stains, if possible.
2. Clean your gutters (I always try to wait until the last leaf, but by then it really is winter) and seal joints with gutter caulk where you suspect leaks. Downspouts should lead at least 6ft away from your foundation.
3. Have your chimney inspected and cleaned.
4. Have your heating system inspected, cleaned and adjusted. Many of the older systems may be significantly out of adjustment. Remember to periodically replace furnace filter. While a dirty filter actually cleans better, it doesn't provide the best air flow and makes your system work harder.
5. Check exterior wood that rests on concrete or is near the ground for rot. Depending on the extent of the problem replace or repaint. Remember to check wooden window-sills as well, especially where cracks between materials can allow water in.
6. Caulk and seal anywhere air may be unintentionally entering your house. This includes around windows and doors, hose spigots, dryer vents and cable jacks. While all exterior assemblies need to "breathe" somewhat, infiltration can account for significant heat loss.
7. Fix alignment of entry doors, then replace door sweeps, door jambs and gasket strips if required.
8. Check wood floors or sub flooring around entry ways for signs of water entry. You may need to caulk your threshold on the outside to help keep water out of the house.
9. Turn off and drain sprinkler systems, store garden hoses inside and shut off outside water faucets.
10. Store firewood 2-3ft off ground and away from your home's foundation.
11. Consider adding a second layer of insulation to your attic. It can cut your annual heating and cooling costs by 15-percent. If you do add insulation, make sure any new or existing vapor barriers are not trapping moisture incorrectly.

October Websites

Weatherization Help
www.bpa.gov/Energy/N/Energy_Tips/weatherization/

www.pge.com/docs/pdfs/res/rebates/weatherization.pdf

Efficient Electric Heat
www.cityofseattle.net/light/printdocs/Elec_heat.pdf

Healthy Weatherization Materials
www.environmentalhomecenter.com/

AFM Safecoat & Safechoice Products
www.afmsafecoat.com/FrontPage.html

Healthy Home & Property
www.sustainable.org/living/home.html



"Every morning I awake torn between a desire to save the world and an inclination to savor it.
This makes it hard to plan the day." - E.B. White

Preparing Your Garden For Winter by Susan Gregory

Now is the time to spend some concentrated time in the garden, if you haven't already, and accomplish several tasks that can make next year's gardening a bit easier and possibly more productive, too. All of the fall tasks dovetail nicely, and you may even burn a few calories as you go, so what are you waiting for? First, take a few minutes to stroll through the yard, making mental notes about what was successful this year, what wasn't and where you might add some planting next year. Especially take a look at any plants that look diseased or pest ridden, and plan to get rid of those first. Picking up fallen fruit from any fruit trees that you may have (hopefully you didn't let too much of it hit the ground, like I did this year) will help break the life cycle of pests that like your apples as much as you do!

Next, go through and harvest dead and dying material from annual flowers and vegetables, and cut back flower heads and stalks from herbaceous perennials. As a general rule, save any pruning of woody shrubs and trees until early spring. Gather this material in a heap while you harvest all those lovely weeds that have sprouted in the moist September weather. As you weed, rake up any leaves that have fallen, as well. If you already have a compost bin and it's empty, you're in luck, begin to layer the dry stuff, cut into small pieces, with the green stuff, sprinkling lightly with water while you go (read moist not wet) and you'll be on your way to the good earth next spring. Add more material as it becomes available, and don't forget to add fall leaves if you have them. If you have access to chicken manure, add that in too, but leave out food scraps, as certain furry creatures will be certain to appear. Top your compost pile off with a thin layer of soil and you're on your way. Don't worry about adding fancy compost activators advertised in gardening magazines. There are plenty of microorganisms in regular garden soil to get things cooking. If you don't have a compost bin, you can simply pile up the material in a suitable place and let it go, or do some research on the best bin system for your situation. Check out the website for Seattle Tilth at www.seattletilth.org for more information on composting.

While you're cleaning up beds and weeding, why not take a few minutes to plant spring-flowering bulbs as you go? You'll feel extra smug when you see them coming up next spring, knowing that the rest of us put off the task too long, and the good colors were gone from the shelf already. Rather than planting spring bulbs singly, plant them in larger groups for the best effect, and consider the plants that will be blooming in your yard next spring when you choose your bulbs. What could be more sustainable than simply walking out into your yard and gathering a luscious bouquet of tulips, but more importantly what could be more satisfying?

If you can accomplish all of this during the next month, you'll go into winter with a glad heart, and your gardening tasks will be lighter when spring arrives.

"It is not easy being green" -Kermit the Frog

A Greener Seattle Highlight **Build Green-Everyone Profits**

There is a growing trend that can no longer be ignored-more organizations, developers, homeowners and tenants are discovering the immense benefits of building, owning and/or leasing Green Buildings. In fact, over five percent of all new U.S. construction projects are now being built green to meet this increasing demand. In 2002 alone, 13,224 green homes were built. For more information on this growing trend, you can read case studies and gather resources online at a new website developed by the City of Seattle in partnership with King County, the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, and the U.S. Green Building Council. www.buildgreennw.com

The Green Door is brought to you by Cally Fulton and Danielle Johnson, both Real Estate Associates with GreenWorks Realty, Seattle and is written by JR Fulton, Architect and LEED Accredited Professional. To save trees and expand the opportunity to share information, please provide us with your e-mail address and the address of others interested in making their homes more sustainable. If you or someone you know would appreciate our real estate services please call- **Cally Fulton(206)786-5061** or **Danielle Johnson(206)679-0185**
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Global Warming

Things that normally happen in geologic time are happening during the span of a human lifetime. Globally the temperature is up 1°F over the past century and the atmosphere's level of carbon dioxide is higher than its been for hundreds of thousands of years.

Ice is melting, sea levels are rising, coastlines are eroding, rivers are running dry, forest fires are increasing, winter is coming later, spring thaw earlier, and flora and fauna are feeling the heat too. We have created the environment that are children and grandchildren will live in and we owe it to them to prepare for higher temperatures and changed weather-and to avoid compounding the damage.

Excerpts taken from National Geographic Sept. 2004

Seattle Sustainable Residence Diary-Entry #5

We are getting ready to close on the Capital Hill property. We need to meet with city prior, to confirm all land use issues. We hope to do a green roof, but will it be affordable? I had forgotten how many drawings the City would want for a permit, now I am a little behind design schedule. Spent most of a day cutting killer black berry bushes back to make it easier (and less costly) for the surveying crew. It is a lot easier designing for someone else, for yourself you are always wanting to make improvements.



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