



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Hard water stains on window are not only unsightly, but the hard water can also reduce the lifespan of window.

Maintain windows to extend their life

By **JENNIFER COLTON**
Staff Writer

Homes are full of maintenance requirements, from air filters to lawn care, but one maintenance opportunity is hidden in plain sight and often ignored: windows.

For Hermiston Glass' Phillip and Kirk Marcum, window maintenance is a daily education.

"Our most common calls are probably defective units or hard water build up from sprinklers — and then the replacements from lawnmowers, baseballs and golf balls," Phillip Marcum said.

Although maintenance can't help much with the stray golf ball or baseball, it can extend the life of your windows and give tips as to when those windows should be replaced.

The lifespan and condition of a window can vary greatly depending on quality, maintenance and installation, but the experts pointed to one exception: Single glazed windows have definitely passed the end of life point.

The more layers a window has, the more it breaks up heat, UV light, and sound, according to the Marcums. Most windows Hermiston Glass sells now have triple pane; some have gas layers in between to further break up those particles. Glass technology

changes yearly, and the U-factor — the measurement of heat transfer that marks how well a window insulates — reflects the changes.

"They're changing the glass and technology so fast, making them more energy efficient," Kirk Marcum said. "It seems like every year we can get a better U-Value."

Efficient windows will help block the wind Umatilla County is known for, as well as keeping a home cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

"We can't tell you that 'this window will save you X amount on your bills in a year,' but in time, people generally realize the savings it does give them," Phillip Marcum said.

To keep your windows in good condition:

- Keep tracks clean, both on window frames and sliding glass doors. Tracks fill with sand and debris, which wears out the wheels and guides and weakens weather stripping. The experts recommend cleaning the track and letting it air dry — never use lubricants as these can attract more dirt and debris.

- Do not use garden hoses or other hard water on windows because it can cause a build up of film that will diminish the quality of the window and, with time, require replacement.

- When spraying insecticides, avoid spraying chemicals near windows as the chemicals can re-

act with those in the sealant and weather stripping, weakening those areas.

- Whenever you have questions about maintenance, quality or condition of windows, contact an expert for an evaluation.

Organize your garage

The garage: the catch-all section of our homes that never seems to get as much TLC as it deserves. It's where the overflow of holiday decorations, outgrown clothes and sports equipment converge, often in disarray.

It's time to take back control of this versatile space in your home. The garage has so much to offer if you're willing to regularly maintain it. This may mean hanging new shelving for extra storage space or repainting the floor for a protective, great-looking shine.

Here are three steps you can take this weekend to achieve a more organized garage:

1. Give Yourself Enough Time

Many homeowners think they can power through a garage reorganization in a matter of a couple of hours. Sure, if your garage is already in relatively good shape, that may be possible. But for people looking to complete an organizational overhaul, it is best to devote the bulk of a weekend to the chore.

Not doing so can leave you feeling frustrated by a job half done. Give yourself enough time to not only assess your current garage storage situation, but then also to put together a plan that highlights what goes where and how much you're willing to spend on new storage materials.

2. Be Ready to Donate

Overflow can be a real problem in the garage. Fishing poles, soccer balls and kids' bikes may as well call the garage their own. Without ample space for these materials, the garage's walls may feel like they are caving in on you.

The solution: Give things away. Plenty of organizations offer some sort of item drop-off. Start a donate pile outside of your garage to collect all the extra items for which you have no use. Take your extra toys and baseball gloves to a deserving charity, but only if you're sure you won't need them again down the road.

3. Never Organize Alone

One of the best tips for organizing your garage is to invite friends and family members over to help. A major garage overhaul can be time consuming, requiring numerous hands on deck if you're hoping to finish anytime soon.

Call over some friends and family members. Have a list of specific responsibilities for volunteers to maximize their time when they are helping you. And remember to always treat your helpers to hot coffee or lunch, a gesture that will let them know they are appreciated.

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