

Insulation, hot water heater questions answered

Q. We're getting ready to convert the attic in our older home into finished living space. Should we remove the insulation in the attic floor before laying down floor boards? Also, when insulating the ceiling, can we just stuff insulation batts between the rafters before hanging sheet rock?

A. Don't worry about removing the floor insulation. It will help provide sound-proofing.

Batts are fine to use for ceiling insulation. But you must pay attention to moisture protection and ventilation when you install them. Use batts with a foil or kraft paper vapor barrier attached. For moisture protection, install the vapor barrier facing the warm side of the room so it rests against the sheet-rock ceiling.

Select a batt size that allows installation with a one-inch air space for ventilation between the underside of the roof and the insulation. Install vents at the eaves and near the ridge of the roof to allow ventilation through the one-inch space.

We generally recommend a minimum of R-30 ceiling insulation. However, if you have a 2-by-6 rafter, the most you can put into the cavity is an R-19 batt, which will not allow for the 1-inch air space. The next standard thickness is three-and-one-half inches, which is R-11. Because we recommend more insulation than R-11, you might nail wood furring strips onto the rafters.

This will provide more cavity space to fill with insulation. Or you can use rigid foam-board insulation along with batt insulation to increase the R-value.

Q. Energy "experts" are always saying we should turn down the thermostat on our water heater, but they never explain how to turn it down. I can't find the thermostat on my water heater.

A. Your water heater is probably electric if you have trouble finding the thermostat. Most electric water heaters have two thermostats hidden by faceplates, one near the bottom and one near the top of the tank. It's important to turn down

both. If you're adventuresome you'll save even more if you set the lower temperature to the minimum temperature, but you may have to raise the setting if you run out of hot water.

First, turn off the electricity to the water heater at the circuit breaker, or main power switch. Then remove the faceplate with a screwdriver. Push aside the insulation underneath the faceplate and you'll see a dial and a pointer. Using the screwdriver, move the pointer to the desired temperature on the dial.

The thermostat on a gas-fired water heater is easier to find. There will be only one. Normally, it will

have a dial labeled "warm" on one side and "hot" on the other. The warm setting usually corresponds roughly to 120 degrees, and the hot to 160 degrees. Simply turn the dial to the temperature you want. Most energy experts recommend 120 degrees if you don't have a dishwasher; 130 degrees if you do.

One reason the experts are always telling you to turn down your water heater thermostat is that water heating accounts for between 20 and 30 percent of most people's annual utility bill. So there are big savings to be had simply by turning down the thermostat.



The Warm Springs Extension Service provides equal access to all its activities and programs.

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Check home for safety problems

Is your home a haven to subtle safety hazards such as carpets that slide when you step on them, electrical outlets overloads with too many appliances, or handrails that are dangerously shaky?

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (NAAAA), too many older Americans will answer "yes" to this question. Unfortunately, many more should answer yes, but don't until after they suffer an accident caused by these or other hazards around

the home.

According to CPSC estimates, more than 600,000 persons 65 and older are treated each year in hospital emergency rooms for injuries occurring in the home. The annual cost of medically attended injuries from accidents to that age group is estimated at \$3 billion.

CPSC reports that among the most frequent accidents involving older people are:

- Falls in the bathroom and on the stairs.
- Burns and smoke inhalation from fires.
- Scalds from hot tap water.
- Electrical shock.

The CPSC and NAAAA are collaborating on the "Home Safety

Program" to help older people identify hazards in their homes and take steps to avoid them, says Vicki Schmall, Oregon State University Extension gerontology specialist.

Currently, the national program is operating in selected urban areas. Safety steps are presented via audio-visual and printed materials. People who attend the meetings are encouraged to use the CPSC "Home Safety Checklist for Older Consumers" to check their homes.

That checklist is free and available to all consumers, Schmall says. For a free copy of "Home Safety Checklist for Older Consumer," send a postcard to CPSC, Washington, D.C. 20207. Don't forget to include your name and address.

Osteoporosis: A bone thinning disease

All women should know about osteoporosis. This bone-thinning condition affects one in four women over the age of 60 and is a major cause of fractures of the spine, hip, wrist and other bones. Treatment may help women who have the disorder and steps can be taken to help prevent it.

Osteoporosis develops silently over a period of many years. Gradually and without discomfort, the bones thin out until some break, causing pain and disability.

Decreasing hormone levels, inadequate calcium in the diet, not enough exposure to sunlight, and inactivity all may play a role in osteoporosis development.

Doctors often prescribe calcium tablets, sometimes with added vitamin D. Because large amounts of vitamin D can be harmful, it's important to take only the amount recommended by your doctor.

People who have osteoporosis should eat foods high in calcium. Daily diets should include dairy products and dark green leafy vegetables. Exercise also helps because it stimulates formation of new bone.

For a free leaflet about aging and osteoporosis, write to the National Institute on Aging, Box BT, Bldg. 31, Room 5C35, Bethesda, MD 20205.

Warm clothing essential in winter

Working outdoors in autumn's increasingly cold temperatures can be a chilling experience without the help of winter work clothes to provide warmth and comfort.

When you bring out your winter work shirts for another season of wear, make sure they're in good shape. Ragged old shirts are more apt to flap around and get caught in work equipment. A new shirt or two may be a timely investment in future safety.

Several types of winter-weight shirts are available. Look at the garment's label to find the content of the cloth and the garment's finish.

The traditional and currently quite fashionable, winter work shirt is cotton or wool plaid in flannel.

Chamois-cloth cotton shirts are also popular. Chamois-cloth shirts have a fuzzy surface on both sides, are typically of plain colors, and have heavier fabric than some flannels.

Cotton or cotton/polyester twill shirts are smooth-finished and provide a better wind-break characteristics than most flannels because of their close weave and hard-twist

yarns.

If you like the extra absorbency of 100 percent cotton, then look for a shirt with a shrink resistant finish such as sanforized or rignel so it will still fit after laundering. Cotton/polyester blend flannel shirts are less likely to shrink, but may be more likely to pill.

Care labels on wool shirts may recommend dry cleaning, but some may say the shirt is washable. If wools are washable, they are usually blended with synthetic fibers and have a shrink resistant finish such as superwash or wurlan.

Another warm alternative in work shirts is the triple-layer quilted flannel shirt with fiberfill and a nylon

lining. Be sure to read the fiber content label. If an acetate lining is used it will probably wear out quickly.

Some stores and/or catalogs offer shirts in both average and tall sizes, so if you have trouble with finding sleeves long enough, look for those tall size categories.

Other features that may be important in work shirts are placement and number of pockets, and whether the shirt buttons or snaps. Better quality shirts will have longer tails, plaids matched, collarpoint stays or reinforcement (to preserve shape), and seams finished to prevent fraying.

FDA approves health messages on foods

Should health messages be allowed on food labels? Until now, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has prohibited disease-prevention claims on product labels.

However, the appearance of health messages on food labels is now becoming more commonplace. For example, a bran cereal label has been suggesting that fiber has a role in cancer prevention.

This claim has gone unchallenged by FDA. In fact, it may have spurred the FDA to reevaluate its regulations on health claims.

The FDA now believes it's worthwhile to consider new ways to inform the public about relationships between diet and health. They believe it's possible to use food labels to communicate health-related information if specific criteria are followed.

The FDA recently proposed some labeling guidelines for public health messages. The new regulations would allow some foods to claim health benefits if several conditions are met.

First, the claim must be truthful and not misleading. Next, it must be supported by valid, reliable, publically available scientific evidence based on appropriate research. The claim must emphasize the importance of the total diet without dis-

torting the value of one product. Finally, along with the health claim, the label must include nutritional information for the food product. The new regulations would establish an interagency committee to develop suggested health message for use on labels. Manufacturers would be able to develop their own messages if the guidelines are followed.

The FDA invites comments on the proposed regulations. Send them by November 2 to Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305), FDA, Room 4-62, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

Tuna casserole recipe given

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups (8 ozs.) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 can (6 to 7 oz) tuna, drained and flaked
- 4 cups cooks macaroni shells*
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley

In a medium saucepan melt butter. Stir in flour. Cook and stir over low heat for one minute. Gradually stir in milk. Cook and stir until mixture boils and thickens. Remove from heat. Add cheddar cheese, stirring until melted. Stir in tuna, macaroni and black pepper. Heat until hot. Serve sprinkled with parsley. Yield: six portions. Per portion: 398 mg. calcium, 544 calories.

Prepare houseplants for winter

It's time to get houseplants ready for another winter indoors.

Because growing conditions indoors are often poor, houseplants aren't too vigorous during the winter.

As a result, the water needs of houseplants are less in the winter season. It's best to let the potting soil dry slightly before watering again with most plants. Leave the soil moist after watering, not saturated. And, let any excess water

drain out the bottom of the pot. Do not leave drain water standing in the dish or other container the plant pot sits in.

Fertilizer needs of houseplants are also less during winter months. It's safe to let houseplants go without fertilizer from late November through early April.

Remove seed pods and wilted flowers and leaves. Prune back long, straggly stems to within one-eighth inch of a leaf joint. Keep plants free of dust and pick off any insects that may be hiding on stems or foliage.

Some plants may need a transfer to larger pots to maintain maximum growth. Most vigorously growing indoor plants need repotting every year or two.

Check the plant root system to determine if it is potbound. Put one hand over the top of the soil, turn the pot upside down, tap the rim softly against the edge of table to loosen the soil, and remove the old pot. A solid mass of roots with little or no soil visible indicates the plant is potbound.

When repotting, use a new container about two inches deeper and wider than the old one. This is usually one size larger in clay flower pots.

Beware!

Don't be taken. Beware of deceptive sales practices. Although few sellers use fraudulent practices, it's important to be one guard against them. Recognize and protect yourself from deception and fraud:

- Be cautious of "free" gifts or "fantastic" bargains.
- Don't let door-to-door sellers in unless you verify that they are from a reliable company.
- Be careful of very low-priced items—they can be stolen.
- Read and understand a contract before signing it. Don't sign a blank contract or one with blank spaces.

Insulate ducts

Uninsulated central heating ducts in attics and/or crawl space can rob up to 40 percent of heat produced by a furnace according to the Alliance to Save Energy. To reduce this loss, they suggest sealing leaks and joints with duct tape or silicon caulk and wrapping ducts with at least two inches of fiberglass insulation or other commercial duct insulation.

Renters can save \$\$

- Renters should look for these dozen money-saving features in properties they consider for rent:
- Windows not cracked or broken.
- Windows and doors weatherstripped and close tightly.
- Water tank and pipes insulated.
- Showers with flow restrictors or low-flow showerheads.
- Faucets that do not leak.
- Fireplace damper which closes tightly.
- Night setback thermostat.
- Storm windows and doors.

Insulated crawl space under floor. Duct work in attic or crawl space insulated. Attic adequately insulated. Reasonable heating costs. Free flyers covering the "renters' dozen" in more detail are available. (For renters) "Renters Be Wise" and for landlords—"Rental Property Weatherization—It can Save You Money." Copies from Susan Vogt, Extension Energy Agent, OSU Extension Service, 3821 SW Canyon Road, Portland, Oregon 97221.

November Beef Management tips

- Develop a parasite control plan to include both internal (worms and grubs) and external (lice) parasites and therefore consider the economics and benefits of pastes, pour-ons and injectables.
- Vaccinate about ten months old heifers for brucellosis. This is a must; it's the law now.
- Consider the proper time to vaccinate pregnant females for leptospirosis (should be done during

the last trimester of pregnancy). Evaluate the nutritional value of stored hay and plan a winter feeding program for brood cows, first calf heifers and replacements. Continue proper mineral and salt supplementation to include selenium. Pregnancy check females and cull those which are open. Also cull based on performance, bad feet, bad eyes, bad ulcer, disposition, etc.

Careful herd culling important

With the high cost of maintaining a cow herd a careful culling program is a must. Although most culling is done in the fall when the calves are weaned, culling should be a year-around program. A permanent identification system so animals can be identified without being restrained is a vital part of a culling program. If animals are properly identified, the producer can note cows which should be culled as he observes problems throughout the year.

Several tests should be applied when culling in the fall. Barren or open cows are the first group which should be removed. Retaining an open cow is seldom justified regardless of the size or quality of her last calf. Any unsoundness which might interfere with the cow bearing or nursing a calf or which might result in unsatisfactory performance on the range in the coming year is a basis for culling. The third basis for culling is the weight and quality of the calf weaned.

Palpate for Pregnancy. The failure to palpate cows in the fall can result in 16 percent of the cow herd being carried open through the winter feeding period. This sets an upper limit of 84 percent of the cows wintered which could wean a calf. The failure to remove open cows from the herd can reduce the potential profit per cow in the herd by nearly \$60 per head.

Remove Unsound cows. In the average year, one of each 100 cows in the herd will need to be culled for unsoundness. Failure to remove this cow might mean that the cow would not wean a calf, and might also result in loss of the income which would have been received from selling the cow. Cows observed with such problems as lump jaw or

cancer eye might in one year become bad enough to cause condemnation of their carcasses. Cows with saggy, poorly attached udders or with large balloon teats which are difficult to nurse should also be culled. Such cows are more subject to udder injury and are a problem in muddy weather since calves often refuse to nurse mud-caked teats.

At times over 18 percent of the cows will need to be replaced each year just to account for the open and unsound cows removed and to replace those that had died. If an 80 percent calf crop is being weaned, 23 percent of the calves weaned or nearly half the heifers would be needed just to maintain herd size. Any culling based on performance must be over and above this number.

In a herd that had not been on a performance program, culling for performance would need to be much higher to maintain a productive herd.

Condition is one additional consideration when culling cows. On the average, the weaning weight of the calf and the amount of fat which the cow puts on her own

Preg-test your cows

Pregnancy testing or palpation as a routine practice at the end of the breeding season can be an important tool in the efficient operation of a beef cow herd. Carrying non-pregnant cows for a full year without any return is one of the largest drains on profit.

The advantages of early pregnancy detection in beef cattle are as follows:

- It gives early warning of breeding trouble, such as infertility in males and problem breeders in females.
- It makes it possible to rebreed or sell non-pregnant females.
- It allows for separation and grouping of females—as pregnant, and non-pregnant giving an opportunity for proper management, i.e. nutrition culling and so forth.
- It gives an operator an opportunity to effectively utilize his facilities at all seasons of the year and particularly at calving time.
- It makes it possible to guarantee pregnancy on females that are for sale.

Cows are commonly pregnancy tested by "rectal palpation." By the

second month, in heifers, and the third month in cows, the uterus becomes enlarged, especially in the pregnant horn and drops into the abdominal cavity. An experienced technician can ascertain the signs of pregnancy by feeling with the gloved hand through the rectal wall. Accuracy in pregnancy testing depends upon the ability to recognize changes in the tone, size and location of the uterine horns and changes in the uterine arteries.

Pregnancy testing is a popular management tool because it affords early pregnancy diagnosis and there is little hazard to the animal when performed by an experienced operator.

It is recommended that cows be pregnancy tested as part of the fall operation after the calves have been weaned and before moving to the winter range. This practice will assure that only cows that are carrying a calf will be overwintered. By selling those cows that are open, you save the cost of their winter feed which is usually valued at \$50-\$125, depending upon the type of operation.