Home Maintenance: Protecting Your Investment

Preparing for Hot Weather
As the temperatures outside increase, what do you need to do to get ready for the long hot days of summer?

- You need to inspect your home inside and outside!
Why worry about the outside appearance of your home?

- You want to be a good neighbor
  - Keeping your house in good condition improves the neighborhood

- You want to protect your investment
  - Your house is one of your largest investments

- You want to save money
  - Taking care of your house now saves money later
Start with the Exterior

- Stand on the curb in front of your home and assess the “curb appeal” of your house
  - Is the paint on your house fading or peeling?
  - Are shingles missing on the roof?
  - Is the porch falling off?
  - Is your driveway full of oil stains?
  - Do your trees need trimmed?
- Walk around the exterior and determine what you need to repair or replace.
Maintaining the Exterior

- If you have a brick house, check for loose bricks
  - Repair or replace loose bricks and mortar
- If you have siding, secure any loose pieces
- Is your house dirty or has patches of mold or mildew?
  - WASH It!
    - Cover your plants and grass before you start and test a small area of your house to make sure the bleach will not cause fading.
    - Use a 3:1 mixture of water and bleach.
    - Apply with a brush or garden sprayer.
    - Allow the mixture to remain on the surface for 20 minutes and then rinse thoroughly
Painting the Exterior

- Why paint?
  - Paint improves the appearance of your home and protects the wood from the elements and insect damage
  - Re-paint when paint is cracking, peeling or fading
- Paint experts at USDA Forest Products Laboratory found that latex paints are the best choice for wood siding
  - Latex paint is more porous than oil-based paint, allowing moisture to escape
  - Oil-based paints become brittle, may yellow as they age and are more prone to mildew
Maintaining the Roof

- Roofing material
  - Most roofs are covered with asphalt shingles that have an average life expectancy of 15 to 20 years

- Replace and repair
  - Replace loose shingles to prevent leaks and future water damage
  - Check flashing around the chimney and vents to make sure there are no gaps where water could enter

- Remove moss
  - Use a 1:1 mixture of bleach and water. Let stand 30 minutes then rinse, taking care to protect the plants below.
  - Slow the growth by increasing airflow and sunlight.
Exterior Maintenance

- Remove debris from the gutters
- Make sure the downspouts carry the water away from the foundation of your house
- Inspect the foundation for cracks and if found, investigate to determine the cause of the crack
Crawl Space

- Crawl under your house or go into your basement and check for any evidence of water, mildew or mold
  - If you find mold, track down the source of moisture and remove it.
- Check the insulation and add more if needed
- Don’t make a habit of making repairs and then leaving the debris under your house
Maintaining your Yard

- Inspect the trees near your house
  - Remove dead branches and those that overhang your roof
- Shrubs and flower beds
  - Trim spring blooming shrubs after they finish blooming
  - Weed flower beds
- Fertilize the grass
- Repair leaky faucets
- Fence
  - Check for evidence of termite damage
  - Repair loose or missing boards and sections of the fence
Clean your Deck

- If you have a deck made of wood, this is a good time to wash it and apply stain or paint if needed
- Power wash
  - Effective at removing surface dirt, mildew, paint & stain
  - Use caution, it can take the finish off along with the dirt
- Chemical wash
  - Chlorine bleach kills mildew, but can lighten the wood
  - Sodium percarbonate products use oxygen bleach to remove mildew and don’t damage the wood
  - Oxalic acid is good for cedar and redwood, but it will need to be used with a cleaner that kills mildew

**Use caution when using chemical washes.**
Garage & Driveway

- Clean and organize your garage
- Remove oil stains
  - Step 1: Apply hydrated lime and leave for one day. Sweep it up. Repeat as needed to absorb excess oil.
  - Step 2: Remove remaining stain by applying a poultice of 1 part trisodium phosphate to 6 parts each of water and lime. Let dry and scrub off with clean water.
  - Tough stains: use paint stripper or tar removal products with xylene or methylene chloride
Windows

- Inspect trim (inside and outside) for insect damage
- Replace broken windows
- Remove storm windows and replace with window screens
Pest Patrol

- Inspect interior and exterior walls and the crawl space or basement for pests.
- Termites
- Cockroaches and other crawling things
- Rodents
Air Conditioner Maintenance

- Have a professional service your air conditioner before you start using it this summer
- Replace the air filter
  - Change it again in 3 months
Water & Electrical

- Repair leaky faucets
- Test your water supply
  - Contact your local county extension office for more information
- Check circuit breaker or fuse box
  - Label switches
Appliances

- Refrigerator and freezer
  - Vacuum coils
  - Inspect door seals/gaskets
    - Dollar bill test
    - Flashlight test
Home Safety

- Develop an evacuation plan
- According to the U.S. Fire Administration, residential fires represented about 83% of all fire deaths in 2005
- PROTECT YOURSELF and YOUR FAMILY!
  - Install Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors
    - Change batteries
    - Make sure you have smoke detectors outside bedroom and near kitchen
  - Recharge the Fire Extinguisher
  - Buy an emergency ladder if you have a two-story house