

The Building Inspector

Newsletter



Plumbing

In this issue, we will discuss several plumbing issues. One important factor to remember is to turn off the water before you start repairs. Make sure to check out Page 3 with the whole family; in case an emergency should arise, all will know what to do!

Hope everyone is enjoying their summer!



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Did you know?

You can determine what the temperature is in your backyard by listening to the crickets! Count the number of chirps you hear in 15 seconds and add 40. That's the ground level temperature in Fahrenheit degrees!



Try these homemade tips:

If you have a moderately clogged drain, try this homemade drain cleaner: Pour 1/2 cup of baking soda down the drain followed by 1/2 cup of vinegar. Be careful. The two ingredients interact with foaming and fumes, so replace the drain cover loosely. Let set for about three hours before running water.

If you know the slow drain is from grease, try this treatment: Pour in 1/2 cup of salt and 1/2 cup of baking soda followed by a teakettle of boiling water. Allow to sit overnight.

You can keep your drains clog-free and odorless by using the following homemade non-corrosive drain cleaner weekly. Combine 1 cup baking soda, 1 cup table salt, and 1/4 cup cream of tartar. Stir ingredients together thoroughly and pour into a clean, covered jar. Pour 1/4 cup of mixture into drain, and immediately add 1 cup boiling water. Wait about 10 seconds, then flush with cold water. Flushing weekly with a generous amount of boiling water also works well.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and an expensive call to a plumber!



Orange-Zucchini Bread

2/3 cup shortening
2 2/3 cups sugar
4 eggs
3 cups shredded zucchini
3 1/3 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon orange extract
1 teaspoon orange rind

Optional:

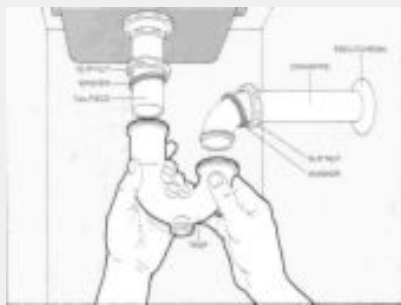
1 cup chopped nuts
1 cup mini chocolate chips

Heat Oven to 350 degrees.
Grease bottom of (2) loaf pan(s).
Mix shortening and sugar in bowl.
Add eggs and zucchini.
Blend in remaining ingredients.
Stir in nuts and chocolate chips.
Pour into pans and bake 60-70 minutes or until wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
Cool before slicing.



Un-clogging the Bathroom Sink Drain:

If the bathroom drain is only slightly clogged, try opening it by removing the drain stopper and probing for hair and other debris with a short piece of wire.



If that doesn't work, try a plunger. Since that bathroom sink drain has an overflow outlet, you will need to plug it with a rag or tape before using a plunger. Use the plunger as you would in an ordinary sink.

If neither of those work, try using a plumber's snake. You may be able to do this from the sink drain. If not, you will have to remove the sink trap.

Setting a pail under the sink, remove the drain trap. From here you may be able to probe with your fingers or a screwdriver and remove any obstruction. If not, then insert the snake into the drainpipe, rotating the auger, feed it in some more, then rotate again. This allows you to drive the snake deeply into the drain.

After the drain pipe is open, replace the drain trap and run very hot water through to flush any remaining debris or sediment.



Main Water Supply Shut Off

The main valve is typically located at the front of the house, either in the basement or outside and should be where the water meter is. Typically the main is located in front, on the supply side of the water

meter, and the house valve is on the other side. To shut off the water, turn the valve located before the water meter to the right. All household members should know how to shut off

Water Heater Maintenance

Draining the water heater will help eliminate any build up of sediment inside the tank, and help keep the water smelling fresh. To drain the tank, first turn down the temperature and let the water in the tank cool for a couple of hours. Turn off the cold water supply, and attach one end of a hose to the bottom drain valve and run the hose to a drain or outside the house. Open a hot water faucet in the house to let air into the top of the tank, and then open the drain valve on the water tank. When all the water has drained from the tank, turn the cold water supply valve off and on a few times, essentially flushing any sediment out of the tank. When the water coming out the drain valve runs clear, disconnect the hose from the drain valve, close the valve and refill the tank. Don't forget to turn off that faucet and turn the thermostat back up.



Sweaty Pipes

It's summertime, it's hot and humid, and your water pipes are *sweating*! Sweating occurs when the water inside the pipe is much colder than surrounding humid air. During the summer, the surrounding air is naturally hot and when warm, humid air reaches cold pipes, drops of moisture form and drip as if there was a tiny hole in the pipe.

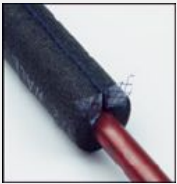
Normally, when not in use, the water and fixtures will warm rapidly to room temperature and the condensation will stop.

When a closet tank or other fixture continues to sweat for hours after it has been used, it is a sign that cold water is continuing to flow through it, possibly due to an improper adjustment of the tank valve or a leak.

If everything appears to be operating properly, then an effective way to control the moisture problem of a sweating pipe is to insulate the pipes.



There are several products available such as insulation tape, which can be wrapped around the pipes and there are form



fitting insulation products. Regardless of which you choose, before applying the product, wipe the pipes as dry as you can.

Even if you do all the things mentioned above, you will not eliminate *all* the moisture from the basement air; just about any basement can benefit from the use of a dehumidifier.



Showers Predicted!

Looking for something fun and educational to do on a warm summer evening? Pack a blanket and a friend and take a ride away from the city lights. From July 23 - August 22 it's time for the Perseid Meteor Showers! The height of the show is August 12-13 and the later you can stay up and watch, the better the show will be. Watch in the northeastern sky and at the peak, you should be able to see one or two meteors a minute.

And if you miss that event, there will be a total lunar eclipse on the night of August 28th. Unfortunately for those of use living in the eastern US, the eclipse will begin around dawn and the moon sets during totality.

