

Fall Maintenance

By Rick Bunzel

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It's that time of year again. The days are getting shorter and cooler. We've had our first taste of snow on Halloween. The winds are picking up and temperatures are nearly freezing at night. While warm days, keep in mind that there are things you'll need to do soon in order to get your house winter-worthy. We are going to tackle this in two articles starting with the outside.

Starting from the top down the first step is to clean any leaves, twigs or other debris off your roof including the gutters. Do not attempt this if your not comfortable climbing a ladder or with heights. Work from the ladder unless you have a low pitched roof. Stay back from the edge and always watch were you step. The easiest way to do accomplish this is to walk on the roof and use a leaf blower for the small stuff and toss the larger branches to the ground. This is also a good time to look at trees overhanging the roof. Tree limbs will quickly damage your shingles and lead to expensive repairs. Tree all limbs back off the roof or have adequate clearance. Once the roof is clean, repeat the process on the gutters.

While you have your ladder out, this is a good time to review the exterior for cracks in the caulking. Look around the windows, where the siding meets the trim and exterior fixtures. I have beige caulk that matches my house color, so I avoid having to touch up the paint after caulking. If you're not so lucky, purchase paintable caulk. Most caulk is water soluble, so cleanup is simplified.

Drain and store outdoor hoses. Most outdoor hose connections I see have frost proof faucets but if you're unsure which type you have, you should turnoff the water to the connection. Some homeowners forget to disconnect their hoses thinking that the frostproof faucet will protect them. What they forget is that the hose and cold side of the faucet still has water in it. This leads to a faucet that only leaks when water is flowing through the hose. If you haven't had you sprinkler system winterized this is when it should be done. Most people either drain the system or have it blown out. If you're unsure how to do it, your local landscaper will be happy to do it for you.

In my neighborhood, we have lots of trees that deposit leaves and limbs onto the ground. Fortunately the wind takes care of most of them except on the lee side of the house. I also learned several years ago that the window wells on the lee side fill up pretty quickly with debris in a single season. The easy solution is window well covers and are well worth it in saved time come spring. Window well covers can be purchased at Home Depot or Lowe's as well as companies that will come to your home and install them for you. You will also want to remove any debris that is building up against the house. This debris will allow the

siding to stay wet and start the decay process. This is also a good time to touch up any siding where the paint has started to peel.

Last, but not least is checking the drainage and downspouts. In many cases the downspout extensions have come off or in the up position. Also look for erosion or areas where runoff has pooled. The key is to direct water away from the home and foundation.

Next week we will look at some of the indoor tasks to prepare your home for winter.

Rick Bunzel is the Principle Inspector at Mountain View Property Inspections. If you would like to know more about your home go to **WWW.MVPinspection.com** If you have questions or comments, Rick Bunzel can be contacted at Mountain View Property Inspections @ 303-443-9063 or MVPInspection@comcast.net