

Check your eaves for shingle flint then replace roof

Spring is a good time to check on the damage that has been done to your roof over the winter.

Tom Wainwright of Glencotta Roofing has a number of suggestions and hints for those contemplating putting on a new roof.

When you're in the garden and start finding shingles around the rose bushes, it's time to have your roof fixed, said Mr. Wainwright.

Most of the warranties for roofing jobs are for 10 years, although some are for 15 and other for 20 years, he said.

"The biggest trouble in this area is ice build-up," he said. A product has been introduced which can minimize the damage that ice does to the roof and it's called a water-shield, but it's an added cost. However, ice can't get underneath the water-shield.

Ice is a homeowner's worst enemy when it comes to keeping a roof damage-free. When the ice melts the soaking breaks the seals on the self-sealing shingles.



TOM WAINWRIGHT

Shingles are also susceptible to wind and heat and because they're made of an oil-based material, they eventually go dry.

If a house is older than 20 years, Mr. Wainwright cautions a homeowner to be careful when inspecting his roof.

Don't walk on the top peaks, don't walk on the valleys and if shingles start to break off when you're walking around, limit your inspection, he said.

If the shingles break under your feet, there's no strength left in them, he said.

A sure way to inspect your roof without risking injury is to take a look through a pair of binoculars, he said. Another way to look at your eavestrough is to see how much of the flint, or pressed stone has accumulated. "There should be almost nothing in the way of flint," said Mr. Wainwright. "Don't be fooled if you see mud because it's really shingle flint," he said.

Mr. Wainwright doesn't do much patchwork because he believes a leak is difficult to repair and it's a sign the entire structure needs new shingles. A patchwork job can't be guaranteed either, he said.

Ventilation is very important to the wear of a roof and proper specifications are figured out in proportion to the number of cubic feet in the attic.

A home has to have a certain number of attic air vents based on a chart to prolong the life of the shingles.

Because homeowners have concentrated so much on insulating their houses, there's more dead air and it promotes dry rot.

Also, when insulation is increased in the attic, the shingles become cooked from the increase as well as the outside. "It's like putting them on a fry pan," Mr. Wainwright said.

Some helpful hints from Mr. Wainwright on hiring a roofer are:

-make sure you enter into a written, proper contract to renovate.

-have the roofer give you a complete description of materials and their costs and you agree on the price before he starts.

-any roofer should replace 'punk' wood at their cost because you can't guarantee a roof for 10 years if the support underneath is rotting.

-check the references and credentials of your roofer. If they haven't worked on your street at all, there's a chance they haven't been around a long time.

-if a roofer asks for money before he starts, think twice about saying yes. Don't pay until they've finished to your satisfaction.

-there is a danger in over-shopping. If you have a low bid in mind, someone will eventually give it to you. But they'll have to take short cuts, use less materials, cheaper materials.

-in general, feel sure you have everything you need in writing. If you have a cost over-run, don't pay it.

If you have questions, call Mr. Wainwright at 877-1314.

Stop weeds before they start

Love to garden? Hate to weed? Here's a hint from commercial growers and landscapers: Mulch film, a type of polyethylene plastic sheeting, will keep any size garden weed-free safely and economically.

Simply lay the mulch film down on the soil, anchor the sides and ends with a bit of dirt, and punch holes with a scissors where seeds or plants will grow.

Mulch film will keep weeds from reaching the surface for the easiest gardening ever. It is unaffected by most garden chemicals, so there's no need to change your gardening practices.

Look for mulch film in hardware stores, home centers or wherever garden supplies are sold. The mulch film should be 1 to 1.5 mil thick and black in color, according to Poly-Tech, makers of number-one selling Film-Gard® mulch film.

Black mulch film blocks the light, so weeds don't have a chance to grow. Black also retains more moisture than white or clear plastic sheeting, and blends in with the soil better.

Some gardeners toss a bit of dirt over their mulch film to conceal the film; others leave their weed-free garden as is.

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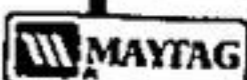
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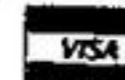
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