

## A preventive maintenance program for your home

As homeowners we should take a page from industry's book and initiate a preventive maintenance program for our home. Industry learned long ago that it is cheaper to maintain both equipment and premises on a regular basis than to wait for a breakdown to repair the problem. It's much like maintaining your car regularly to prevent large repair bills later.

A good plan is to sit down with a calendar early in the year and note jobs that should be done regularly as well as the seasonal chores. This will act as a reminder as you turn the pages of the calendar each month. It is also wise to note the items you hadn't thought of, as they occur. The calendar then serves as an excellent reference next year.

In a short column like this we can't list every necessary job but we will note a few and let you otherwise compile your own unique list.

1. The furnace has several areas that need attention. First, the motor should be lubricated once a year, preferably at the start of the season. Do not pump quantities of oil into the oiling cap. A drop or two is sufficient as too much oil could cause problems. While there, check the fan belt for fraying or brittleness. If it shows signs of either, replace it. Filters should be changed regularly for best performance. Do not forget about the humidifier if you have one. This should be cleaned and the elements or drum sleeve inspected and changed if

necessary.

2. Drains should be treated with one of the drain cleaners on the market regularly (at least twice a year). There is always a build-up of grease, hair or soap and regular attention can prevent a disastrous flood later. At the same time, check the workings of your toilet tank for wear and corrosion. The cost of water leakage can far exceed the cost of replacement workings. While checking the plumbing examine all the tap washers. Not only does a worn washer waste money with water leakage but prolonged use of a tap with a worn washer may ruin the seat, necessitating expensive repair or replacement.

3. Gutters and downspouts should be checked before the winter sets in, and all leaves and debris should be removed. The latter can create an ice dam and cause water to back up and leak into the house. Joints should also be checked and sealed if they are leaking. The downspout can be tested with a fast-running hose to insure there are no blockages. If your downspout empties near the house, be sure the flow is away from the foundation to prevent flooding from heavy fall or spring rains and melt-off.

4. Check the hoses on your automatic washer regularly and make it a rule to shut off the water supply to the washer after each use. Many floods have been caused by split washer hoses.

## All about sandpaper

We commonly refer to the abrasive paper we use to smooth wood as "sandpaper." This is actually a misnomer. The abrasive paper we use today is divided into two types, neither of them uses sand.

The natural abrasives found on these papers are: flint, garnet and emery. The manmade grits are: aluminum oxide and silicon carbide.

The abrasive mineral functions as the cutting agent. It is bonded to a paper or cloth backing with modern glues that firmly keep the grit in place through even the roughest use. Present-day coating is far more even than it used to be due to the electrostatic coating process now available.

**FLINT ABRASIVE** ... Poor to fair cutting power with short durability, used for light sanding and roughing operations.

**GARNET** ... Red to reddish-brown abrasive with good cutting power and good durability. Still a favorite of many cabinet makers who prefer it over man-made grit.

**EMERY** ... The familiar black abrasive usually bonded to a blue fabric backing. Medium cutting power and poor durability, this product is usually used in metal finishing.

**ALUMINUM OXIDE** ... A man-



made reddish brown or white abrasive, probably the most widely used today. It has a good to excellent durability with excellent cutting power. It is used primarily for woodworking but can also be used for metal working.

**SILICON CARBIDE** ... A bluish-black manmade abrasive with good to excellent cutting power and long life. It can be used for woodworking and metal

finishing.

**WET SANDPAPERS** ... These so-called "wet sandpapers" are really the same as regular sandpaper except the backing and glue are waterproofed allowing you to use a lubricant (either oil or water) while sanding. This process is often used to bring an extra high gloss finish to boats, cars and furniture. Using a lubricant also considerably prolongs the life of the paper.

**POWER SANDERS** ... Power sanders are available in several types. The fastest working of all sanders is the belt sander. It can be used for fast stock removal and leveling of rough surfaces, however care must be taken because of the fast cutting action.

The oscillating and/or orbital sander is excellent for finishing cabinet and woodworking projects and other fine projects.

Disk sanders are mostly used for the fast removal of stock, paint or shaping wood. They are hard to handle and best suited for rough wood and metal work.

The palm or block sander is a very high speed finishing sander that does an excellent job in finishing furniture. An orbital speed of about 22,000 R.P.M. generates the best finish of all.

**HINTS** ... The finer grades of sandpaper are often very fragile. To make them last longer a backing of masking tape will strengthen the paper and make it last considerably longer.

## About propane torches

The modern, low-priced propane torch that is generally available in all hardware stores is a marvel. It can be used for a myriad of applications from soldering copper pipe to stripping paint to loosening a frozen bolt. It has come a long way from the old "blowtorch" that used naphtha gas, had to be pumped and was, to say the least, dangerous.

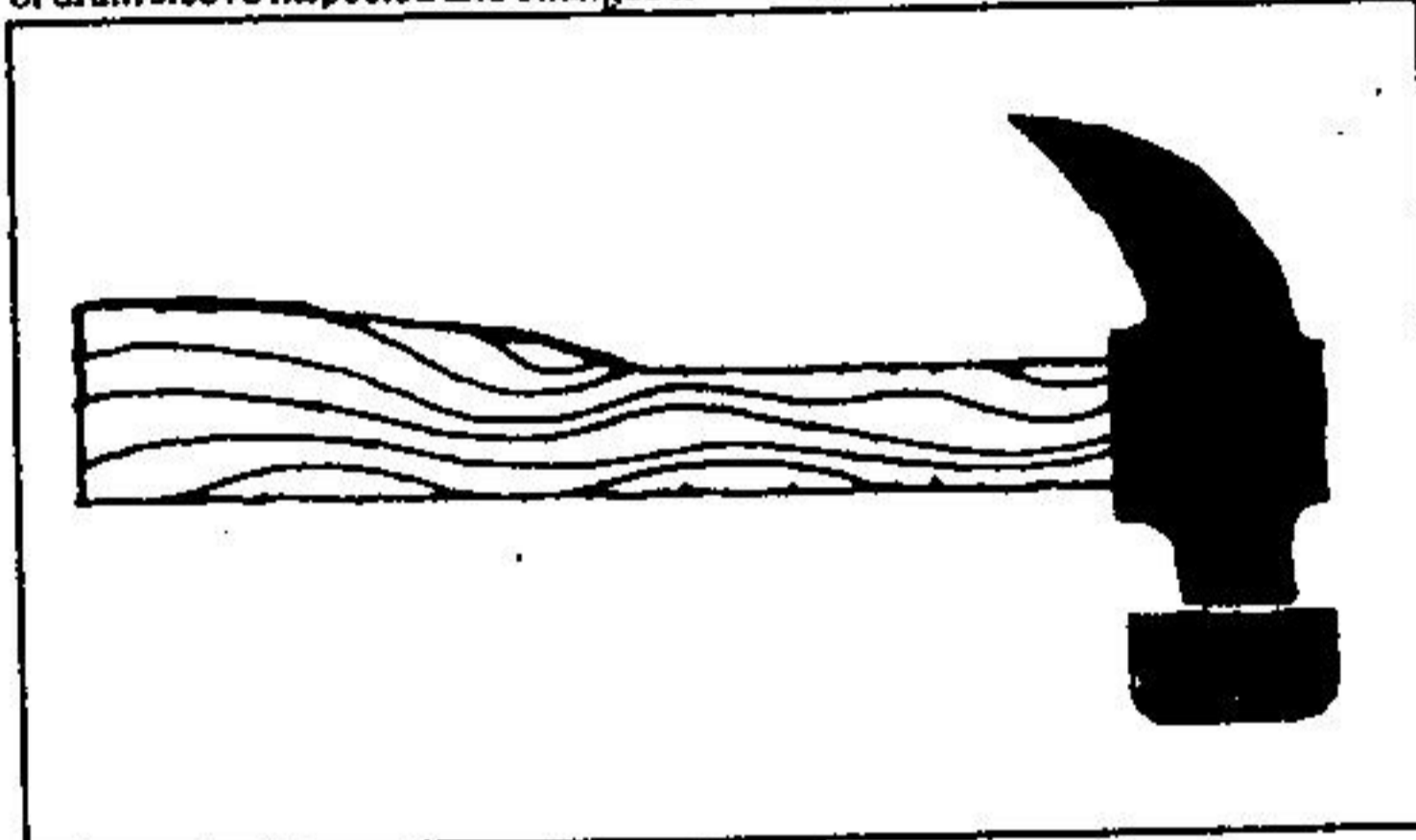
The basic torch evolved in several areas that expanded its applications and improved its safety. A big contributor to safety is the new push-a-button-to-light torch. This device is ignited by simply pushing a button conveniently located at your thumb, stays lit while

you hold the button in and extinguishes when you release the button. This means you do not have a live torch burning while you're working. It burns only when needed, saving fuel and preventing accidental fires and burns. The manufacturers claim the lighter is good for thousands of ignitions.

Another relatively new development is the Spitfire type of torch. Spitfire is a brand name and some other manufacturers have introduced a torch that is somewhat similar. This type of torch has a head that introduces more air to the combustion process, thereby generating much higher heat. It can be used for brazing and soldering and brings work to heat much quicker. A word of caution: If you are using this torch to solder copper pipe, be sure not to hold the flame on the spot too long. The heat is great enough to melt the copper! Another disadvantage is the high heat is that it is too hot to use for stripping paint. However, these disadvantages

are far outweighed by the performance when brazing or struggling to loosen a frozen bolt. These devices are not the expensive and you could have one of each of the heads in your workshop, enabling you to use the right head for the job.

A word on safety! The propane used by most do-it-yourselfers is the small hand-held tank on which you mount the head. This tank has a very narrow base and many fires have been started when a tank has been knocked over when lit. The problem can be eliminated by buying a push-button instant-light torch or fastening a deep juice can to an 8"-plywood square and standing the torch inside the can. However, you still must be very careful of the burning torch. One touch of the flame on your arm can be extremely painful. Another thing to remember is to always remove the head when finished with the job. A valve can leak propane, being heavier than air, will lie in a low spot waiting to



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