

Make Home Improvements Before Winter Arrives

(MS) — Whether aesthetic appeal, home repair or weatherproofing is the motive, fall is a great time for home renovating and refurbishing. The intense summer heat has died down, and the cool breezes signaling the forthcoming winter winds are in the air. Is your home in pristine condition and ready for such seasonal attributes as hazardous weather conditions and the holidays?

Some jobs may require a sizable investment of time and money, as well as electrical or carpentry skills. Others will require minimal effort and resources. Whichever is the case, giving immediate

attention where it's needed will enhance and improve the condition of your home, preserving it for a lifetime of memories.

Home-improvement projects can assume any number of forms, from installing a new kitchen sink to putting up new window screens to adding a whole new room to the house. Energy-conscious homeowners know that installing insulation in certain areas can help reduce heating bills this winter, as well as decrease air pollutants.

Fall is also the season to check the condition of the roof and gutters, perhaps drywall the garage or basement for a clean

work space this winter, install storm doors, or remodel unfinished attic space.

Home improvements are also a great way to get the whole family involved. When was the last time you gathered the entire "clan" and assigned a thorough cleaning of the house? With the holidays ahead, assigning once-a-week house-cleaning chores to the children will get things in tiptop shape for grandma and grandpa's visit.

While the family is packing up summer clothes for storage and bringing out fall and winter wear, closets can be reorganized and straightened up for maximum

storage efficiency and ease of use. So, ask everyone to invest some additional time to get the most out of the living space.

No matter what you undertake this fall, be sure to evaluate whether or not fix-it projects are within your capabilities as a do-it-yourselfer. If trying a particularly complicated job, remember that two heads are better than one: Go to a local hardware store or home center to get helpful advice and information. If you're hiring a contractor, make sure you explain exact specifications, get references on the person you hire and get everything in writing.

Ladies and Gentlemen, 'Start Your Rollers!'

By Mike Ferrara, The Lazy Homeowner

(MS) — Cooler weather soon will have most of us spending more time inside the house. If you can't stand spending another winter staring at your dingy, off-white walls, fall is the perfect time to paint.

Yeah, I know, the last time you volunteered for this duty, you spent endless hours dragging a messy roller tray around several rooms, trying to achieve a quality job. This time, you won't have all that hassle. With a little effort and the right tools, you really can achieve professional results.

First, pick your paint. Purchase the best-quality paint you can afford. Professionals in the paint department of your local hardware store or home center can help you choose the right type of paint and the perfect color.

Next, choose your painting tools. Using a power roller cuts your work time and provides a professional finish. Although there are manual-feed power rollers available, I much prefer battery- or electric-powered rollers, because you don't have to keep pumping them up! Wagner's new power rollers pump the paint directly to an internally fed roller to assure an even, smooth finish without wasting paint.

Wagner electric and cordless power rollers come with a variety of options, like suction kits, extension wands and trim pads. With prices starting as low as \$39, you'll find yourself painting two or more rooms in no time.

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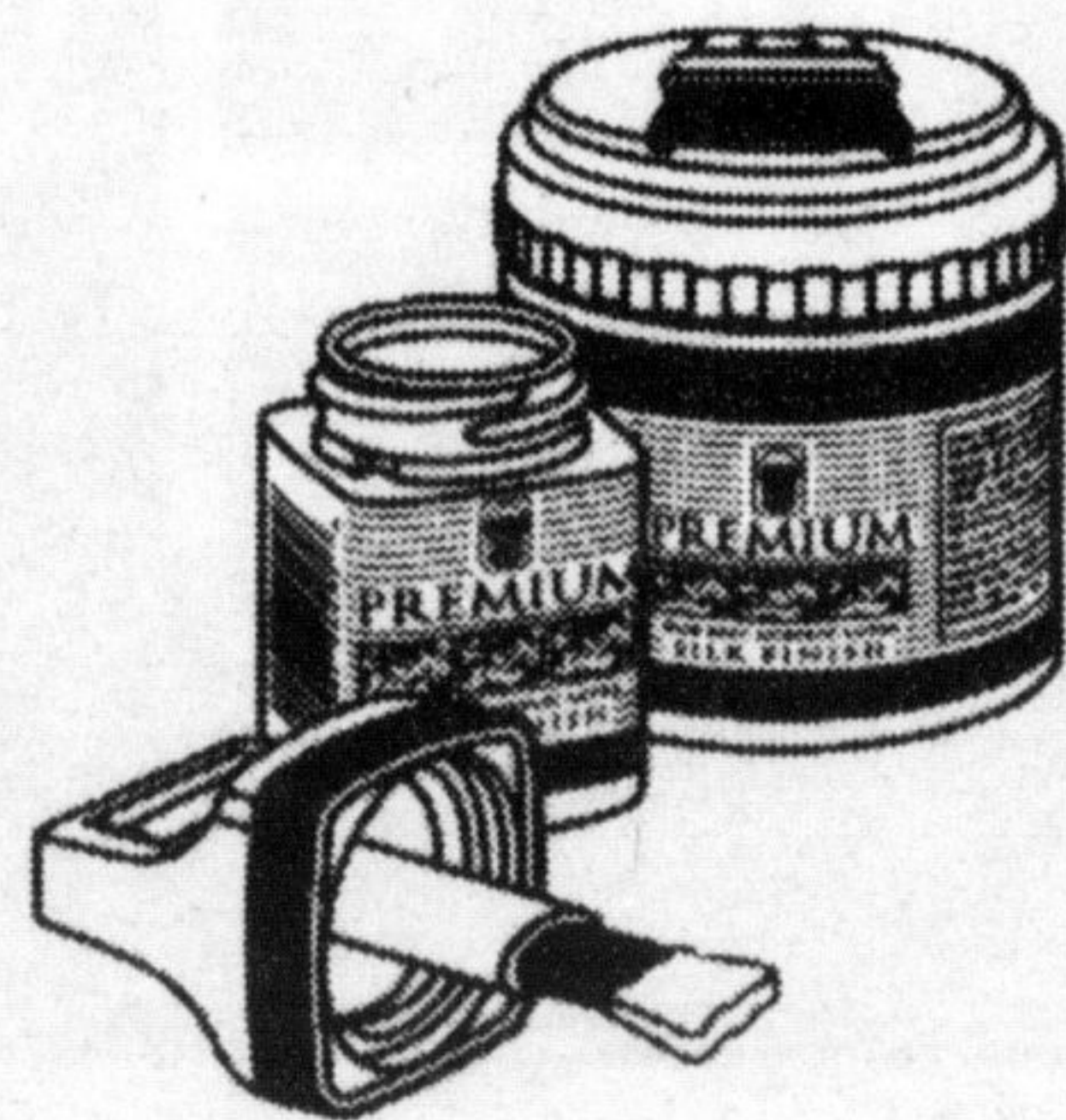
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