

HOME

EXPRESSIONS

HOME

Inspect your home for winter damage

(SOP) Minor maintenance and repairs now can often prevent the need for major repairs later. And if large-scale work is necessary, you may still be able to beat the warm-weather rush to hire professional help.

Start by examining gutters and downspouts.

Notice whether any sections are misaligned or have pulled away from the edge of the roof or sides of the house. Clear debris from the splash

blocks — the concrete troughs below the downspouts — and, if necessary, reposition them so water from the roof drains safely from the building's foundation.

Improperly placed and missing splash blocks are a major cause of basement leakage. Splash blocks are sold at building supply centres.

To check downspouts for blockage insert a garden hose from below and force the hose upward. Equip

the hose with a nozzle set for hard spray; if the hose jams before reaching the top, turn on the water to clear the debris.

On a day when the weather is good and the ground is firm, climb a ladder to inspect and clear the gutters. While there, you can realign gutter sections, repair and replace broken brackets, and patch any holes that have developed in the troughs.

Also inspect the roof. Look for damaged or missing shingles, a common cause of roof leaks.

Curled asphalt or fiberglass shingles can be cemented flat with asphalt or plastic roofing cement, but only on a warm day when the shingles are flexible.

Broken shingles can be repaired

by sliding a piece of metal, such as aluminum siding or flashing, beneath them, then liberally spreading roofing cement between the two. Missing shingles must be replaced.

Examine the flashing at roof seams and around the chimney, vent stack and other openings, such as skylights. Also inspect areas around television antennas and guy wires.

Patch any holes or cracks and seal any fasteners that penetrate the roof by covering them with roofing cement.

Apply the cement in a smooth layer with a flexible-blade putty knife. Avoid creating ridges that can trap water.

Check the chimney for deteriorating mortar. If damage is wide

spread, you will have to consult a mason. If minor, you can repair it yourself, although you might want to wait for warm weather.

To patch crumbling mortar, chisel it out from between bricks to a depth of at least half an inch (1 cm), then apply fresh mortar. Smooth the joints with a small masonry tool called a brick jointer.

Deeply blistered paint that reveals bare wood when pulled away is a sign of condensation inside the walls. Before repainting, you will have to remedy this, or the condition will continue and cause more damage.

Creating a vapor barrier, either with material or paint on the warm (indoor) side of the wall, will help cure condensation by preventing moisture generated indoors from passing into the walls.

Inspect siding, too. Vinyl and aluminum siding rarely need attention. But wood siding may crack, warp or decay.

Repair cracks and opened seams by filling with caulking compound. Small areas of decay can be restored with epoxy filler sold for the purpose at paint stores and home centres. If damage is extensive, or if siding is badly warped, decayed areas should be cut out and replaced.

Hairline cracks in concrete and stucco can usually be left alone. Larger cracks can be filled with caulking compound, patching cement or a stucco repair product resembling plaster, but disguising repairs to concrete and stucco is difficult.

Check wood trim for the same signs of deterioration as wood siding, and inspect the glazing compound around the window glass. When glazing compound deteriorates, moisture can enter wooden window sashes, causing decay.

Cracked compound that is still firm can be sealed by painting it. But if compound can be pried loose with a penknife or is missing in spots, it should be repaired.



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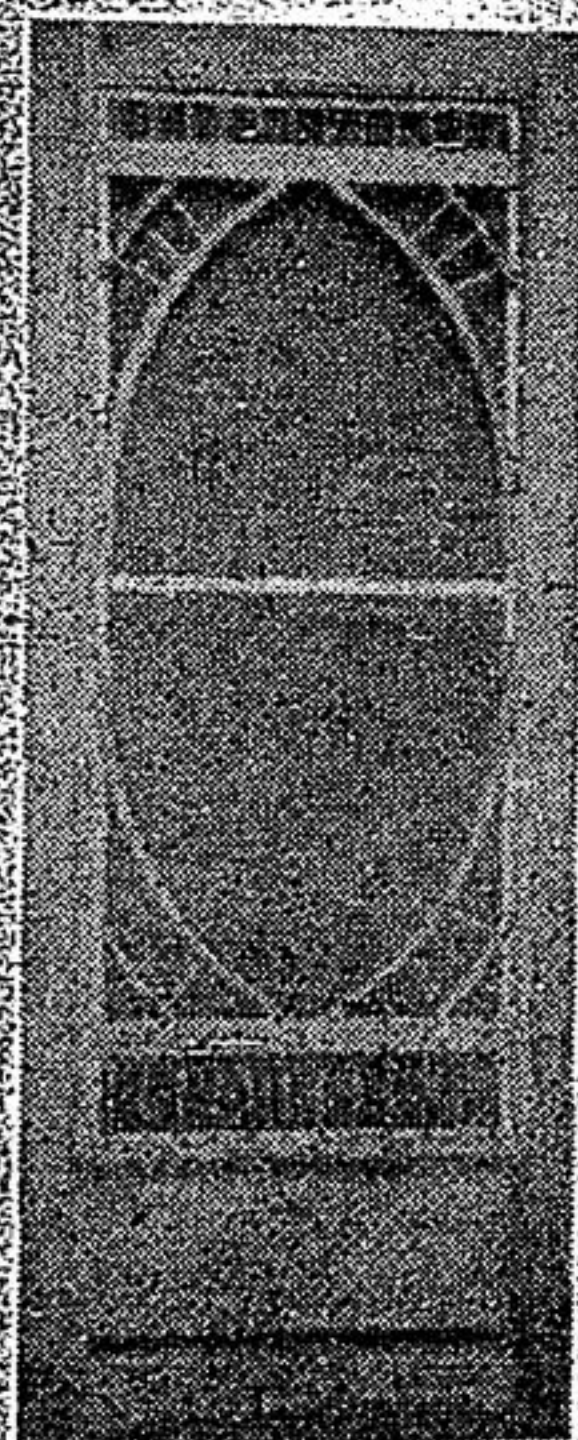
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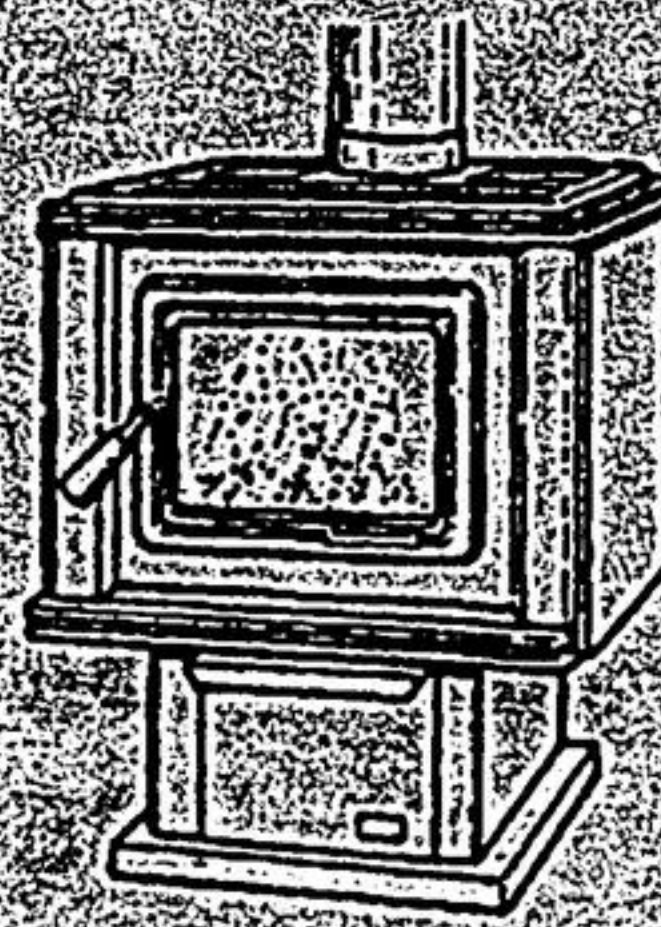
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