

Home Impressions

Cracks in your home may burn a hole in your pocket

The costs of keeping up a home seem to rise every year, and home-owners find themselves putting off ski weekends and tropical vacations in order to meet expenses. But there is a money-saving measure all homeowners can take that makes those sacrifices unnecessary: insulation.

How can you tell if your home is leaking energy dollars?

With winter just around the corner, now is the perfect time to assess your home's insulation, and make sure that the money you're spending on heating (and, in summer, on

cooling) literally isn't going out the window.

Air infiltration, the process through which costly energy leaks occur, can happen in numerous places in the average home: between eaves, under thresholds, between baseboards, under exhaust ducts around chimneys, under and on top of loose siding, and between corner joints and flashings, to name just a few.

So, it is especially important to check carefully for those places where wasteful energy leakage may be occurring and, before winter's winds

begin to howl, make sure they are sealed effectively, in order

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to prevent unnecessary heat loss in the months of cold

weather ahead.

Even if the walls and attic of your house are adequately insulated, you still may be losing energy through random cracks and through spaces around doors and windows. In fact, these often-overlooked areas can account for at least 38 percent of the heat loss from the typically insulated home.

In a well-insulated house, the largest source of energy loss can be the air leaks around windows and doors and through other cracks.

Amazing as that may seem, even more amazing is the fact

that, of all areas in the home, these are among the simplest and the least costly to insulate effectively — yet, too often, they simply are neglected.

Using caulking obtainable at your local hardware or home renovation store, you can often plug these small cracks relatively easily. Another alternative is adhesive-backed foam insulation strips which can be placed to cut off the leaks.

These measures are not only easy and inexpensive, they'll save you far more than they're worth on your heating bill over a long, cold winter.

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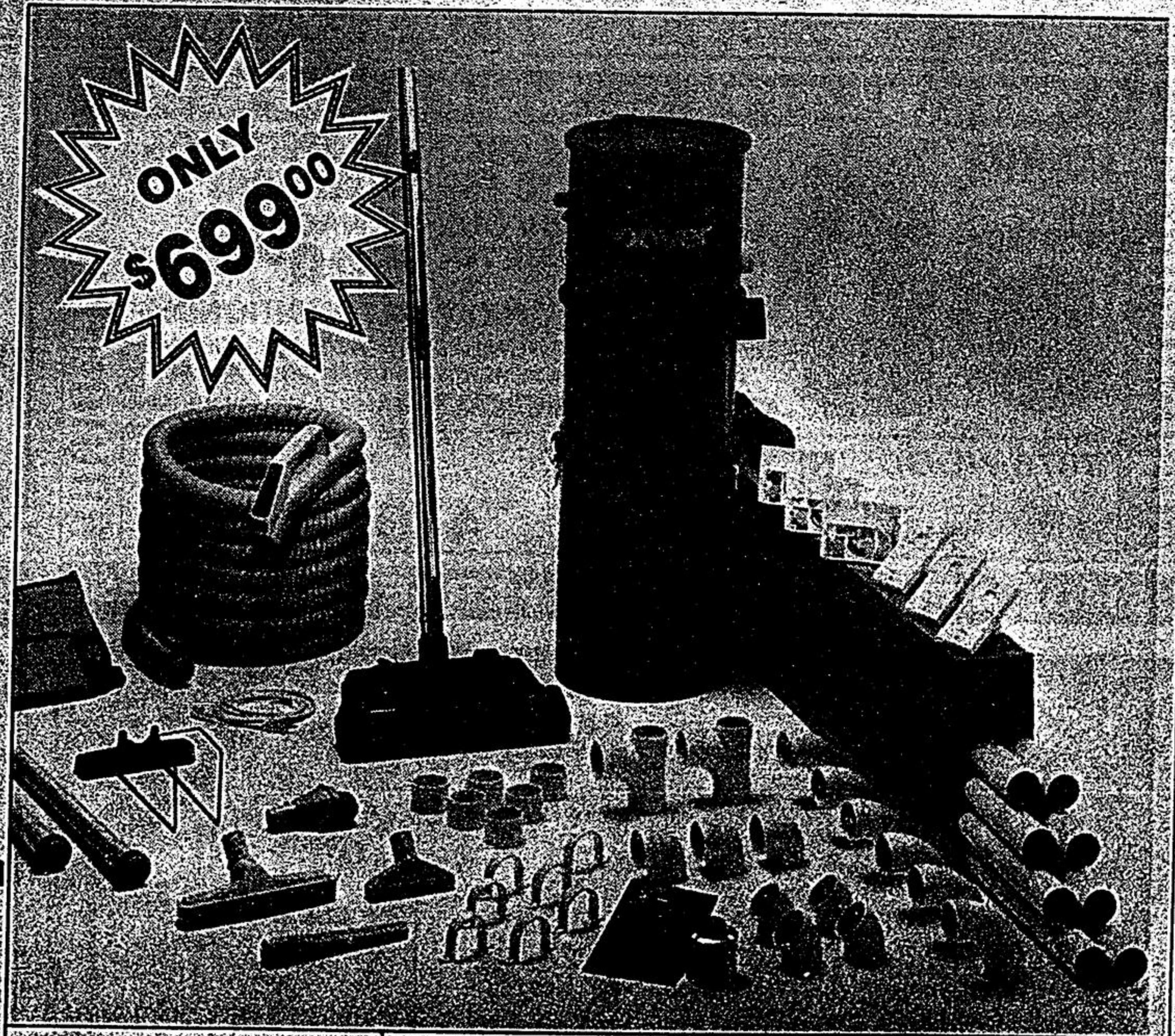
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