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Painter's Preview



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Winter Preparation: A Holiday Punch List

Have you thought about preparing your home for winter yet? With 90 degree days in October, I know I have certainly overlooked Nature's impending fury of cold weather. Here are a few things you can do to help protect your home against the elements before it's too late:

1. Check and replace the caulking around your windows. You can also check the insulation around your doors by holding a lit match to the cracks. Both of these are easy fixes that can save a ton on your heating bill.
2. Clean the leaves and sticks out of your gutters before the snow falls. It will be much harder to do so in the springtime.

3. Empty out things you are not going to use for a while. This includes purging your sprinkler system as well as emptying old gasoline from lawn mowers.

4. The time to fix your roof is now! Broken shingles and cracks can lead to major damage down the line, especially with the potential for water getting in there and freezing.

5. Get your chimney swept before you start roasting those chestnuts.

6. Probably most importantly, check your fire alarms. Extra lighting, decorations, and candles make for extra fire hazards around the holidays. ◇

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Cookies in a Jar?

Many people have memories of making cookies and candy with Grandma during the holiday season. The sumptuous fragrances of vanilla and cinnamon rush back to my mind now as I reminisce—but I remember making potpourri jars. If you find yourself in last minute gift-giving angst, I would recommend crafting these easy (not to mention cheap!) decorations.

You will need: a Mason jar, a doily, a short strand of holiday lights, some ribbon and, of course, your favorite scented potpourri. The first thing you will want to do is place all the lights into the empty Mason jar. Then, pour in as much potpourri as you can fit on top of the lights. You may want to shuffle the lights around within the potpourri after you have done this last step so that the lights do not cluster together. Making sure that you have left enough cord outside of the jar for the lights to be plugged in, place the doily on top of the jar and secure it with ribbon. Lastly, test it to make sure all the lights seem to be in their proper place within the jar.

If the lights are left on, the potpourri will warm up and release a delicious scent. Each jar takes no longer than a few minutes to make and your friends will praise your craftiness. Enjoy! ◇

