

Preparing for winter includes outdoor house projects

By Susan Skorupa, Reno Gazette-Journal

Look out the window or the back door; stroll around the house, paying attention to the things you've overlooked all summer.

The gutters under the roof eaves already are filling with leaves, the back deck is scuffed and splintered in some spots, a few roof shingles look ragged.

Already in the evening, chilly drafts are seeping inside from around doors that open to the outside or the unheated garage. Window curtains dance with the slight breeze around unopened windows indicating some kind of unsealed space where the outside is creeping inside.

Winter's coming. Time to clean the furnace and boost the amount of insulation in the attic, but it's also time to look at the exterior of the house. What's going on with roofs, gutters, windows, doors and outdoor living areas needs attention, too.

Where to start? No. 1 on the list: Caulking. Door frames and window frames inside and out can let cold air inside.

"Caulking today is more scientific than it was 10 years ago," said Chuck White, field divisional merchandising manager for the Home Depot western division. "At minus 50 or at 110 degrees, you can put it on. The technology has grown and it lasts longer; it's easier to use and consumer friendly. It's the No. 1 repair that do-it-yourselfers can do."

Look up on the roof. Rather than climbing around on the shingles, scan the roof for loose shingles or flashing or possible weak spots from a ladder or from inside a neighbor's

house.

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