

Water in your crawl space? Not a good thing.

This is the time of year that you should make a thorough inspection of your crawl space. Water shows up starting now if there is an exterior drainage issue around your house.

It could be a leaking sprinkler system on your part or a neighbor who is over-watering and the drainage heads your way.

Crawl around and check the soil. Slightly damp is not too much of a problem, but mud or standing water is.

The cause will have to be isolated and corrected. Without doing this, eventually you will begin to see signs of settling, mildew, or even mold.

Some hints that you may have a problem now is a musty smell in part of the house, doors that are not closing right, or cracks in drywall above doors and above or below windows.

Any time you know you have a problem related to this, you need to contact your Homeowners Insurance Agent and find out how to proceed. Corrective repairs can be quite costly, so be sure to get good information and solutions.



We all know that there is a difference between a real lumber yard and the box stores. Specialty materials, better advice and service are all part of what your local building material supplier can offer. But delivery is often forgot about. Proper equipment, pin point scheduling, and material handling expertise are what lumber yards excel at. And usually it is free within a reasonable area. Shop at lumberyards. This is why the professional builders do!

Final thoughts....

As we head into the heat of summer, Not that your To-Do list has too few of items on it already, but here are some things to work on:

-  Inspect your roof for any blown off shingles or cracked flashings and sealants.
-  Replace all of your smoke alarm batteries.
-  Readjust the closers on screen doors to the summer setting if you take the glass out or to control the speed of the close.
-  Make sure your sprinklers are not hitting the house or flooding flower beds along the foundation.
-  Trim back bushes or vines that have grown up against your house.
-  Remove any tree branches hanging over roof lines. Thin out any dead wood.
-  Change the oil in your lawn mower
-  Verify that your attic fans, if you have some, are working and free of obstructions.
-  Test your air conditioner and make sure all is running at top performance before it gets really hot.

Check out www.joeprin.com Today!

8

The **HOMEFIX** Club!

Issue #2 June 2009

An Elite Club Open To Anyone Interested In Making Their Homes Better And Having More Fun Doing It

Eagle Independent Newspaper Column

Throwback!

- By Joe Prin Originally published 4-1-2008

So how is that backyard project coming? Its time to get going on it!

Well thought out outdoor living space is a great way to add value to your home and to make it more enjoyable for you.

When designing your deck, patio, or combination area, think in ZONES. A Zone is an area of your outdoor living space designed for a specific function or event. For example: Your deck/patio plan may have a zone for a BBQ zone or a full outdoor kitchen. There may be a seated conversation zone, a fire pit zone, a play zone, or a traffic or pass through zone.

The different areas should be independent of each other in your design. What I mean here is that you do not have to go through the center of one zone to get to another. So if you are cooking, you can go from the house to the grill area without having to tromp right through the conversation area. Also allow walk space from the doors of the house to the yard beyond the deck.

When I design a backyard living space, I always start on paper with an idea of what zones I want to build into the project. I try to visualize the pitch of the sun in different seasons, how the view will be from the more quiet zones, and how it will all look from the house and from the property lines back to the house. I also try to break up the different zones by altering the height of the walking surfaces or by combining different materials such as Composite Decking in the conversation area, but maybe stamped concrete in the cooking zone.

Remember also that as you design this new space for your home, you want it to look like it is there on purpose. It should be an extension of the home and not just a tacked on add on. If you have stone or brick on the exterior of your house, you should try to incorporate this into some areas of the new space. Colors should match or coordinate.

Use handrails or partition walls to not to block off areas, but to create more intimate or quiet areas. Rails naturally redirect traffic and create pathways. You can use handrails where building codes so not require them for decorative or privacy issues.

Be sure to incorporate a lot of outdoor low voltage lighting into your design. Solar lighting is nice and easy to install, but a 12-volt system will allow for timers and brighter lighting.

Cooking centers are getting crazy. The Outdoor Kitchen is great for entertaining and large groups, but if it is mostly your family and a few guests, save the space for other zones.

If you have a hot tub or spa, allow plenty of space around it. I like to see at least 6 feet on 2 sides and a minimum of four on the other two. Too many designs I see do not leave enough room and feel uncomfortable to be in.

Fire Pit? Consider a gravel or loose stone inset into the deck or patio for about 4 feet around the pit. It is much easier to keep clean and safer also.

Finally, take your design to the backyard with string, tape, stakes, or spray paint. Walk through it. See how it feels. Good? Get a permit and build it!

And then there are just some people who should not be Plumbers.



BAD Hunter 5 Minute Ceiling Fan

I should have known better. 5 Minute Fan? Come on. I was skeptical going into it, and I was right. I cussed at this ceiling fan more than I have at any product of late.

Don't get me wrong, Hunter makes a really good fan, but to market this product as a five minute install is a very misleading.

The fan is beautiful and works fine. That is all the nice stuff I can say.

I got this fan as a sample from the manufacturer. They wanted me to talk about it on the radio show. I even interviewed a guy from Hunter and we talked about how I would let the listeners know what I think. I am going to have a hard time holding back my tongue.

First, I took the approach of a novice. I have put up probably 20 fans over the years, but I thought I should go about it as a first time do-it-yourselfer should. I opened the box and found the installation manual. "Read this entire manual carefully before beginning installation". That right there took 9 minutes. I then separated the parts and modified the fan as instructed to fit my hugger style mounting application. 10 more minutes. Hanging bracket and test fit, 4 minutes.

The wiring instructions were not very clear. In my ceiling I had a black wire and a white wire. The fan had a black, a white, and a black with a white stripe. The instructions did not say what to do with the stripe wire. I hung the fan on the mounting bracket with the black and white. No lights. Take the fan down, I tried the two blacks together, and the lights worked. Would have been nice to have this noted in the instructions. 15 more minutes.

The snap on blades worked pretty good. Not great. And then the %&\$\$@*! light kit. Whoever thought it was a good idea to fish the pull chains through these little plastic grommets, through the glass and then through a trim piece with more little plastic grommets should be suspended from a ceiling fan and put on twirl for hours. Not good. I fumbled with this trying to feed chains and snap connectors together for almost 15 more minutes.

Total time? 53 minutes. **Note to Hunter-** Change your packaging and tell the truth.

- Joe Prin



GOOD American Standard Bath Faucet

After the fan fiasco, the very next day I had to install a new, actually two, bathroom faucets onto new china lavs. I grabbed these American Standard Cadet units because of the cost at the box store. \$44 each.

At the time I didn't notice the claim in the green circle that says "1/3 the parts, installs in 1/3 the time". I thought, "Great, another one of those." I was pleasantly surprised.

With the pop up assembly designed the way it is with a cable type activation mechanism, and the lack of need to use plumbers putty to install it, I had both faucets attached to the two new sinks, supply lines on to the faucet, dropped in the counter top, connected to the drain and angle stops... Both sinks, in 20 minutes! 5 more for removing the aerators and clearing the lines and 5 more for caulking in the sinks to the counter top and they worked perfectly. 30 minutes total. NO PROBLEMS and BETTER than ADVERTISED. **Note to American Standard-** Well Done! Thank you for thinking this one out.

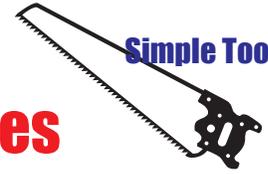
- Joe Prin





Raised Bed Garden Boxes

Simple Tools!



**Built By Rob Scholes, Evans Building Center,
Eagle Idaho**

Rob is one of the guys at Evans Building Center that has to put up with me as a customer. Now I am bugging him to get me some of his projects for this newsletter!

Recently, Rob built these garden boxes in his backyard.

He used 2x6 redwood and assembled the sides as individual components. Corner and mid cleats were incorporated to secure the side planks together and to provide attachment points for the end caps.

All holes were pre drilled and counter sunk. The boards were clamped to the cleats and the screws driven in.

The long side panels were then positioned where Rob wanted them in his backyard and the end panels attached. The cleats provided a point in the corner for the clamp to attach and the screws were driven in.

The boxes were then leveled and placed in their final position and dug in ever so slightly to the base soil.



As most projects go, Rob learned something from a fellow gardener. As you can see in the lead photo, Rob used a liquid coating on the inside of the box to prevent decay. A gardener also suggested that he could have used a plastic or rubber sheet around the sides, while incorporating a weed barrier on the bottom. Oh well, I can tell you this, the tomatoes Rob planted can not tell the difference as they are doing well and getting ready to provide plenty of fruit. Or is it a vegetable?

If you need to build some of these yourself, look up Rob at Evans Building Center in Eagle. He can help you out with this and just about any other project you may be dreaming of.

Tools needed:

**Saw, Speed Square, Pencil, Drill, Pre-drill tip,
#2 Tip, clamps, level, shovel.**

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Saturdays 8-10 AM



BEFORE



4 Hour Bathroom Makeover

by Joe Prin

Should have been three!

This is a project that was a first for me. A good friend needed a bath tub and shower fixed and done quickly, and at a good price. I was talking with Bill McDaniel at Gem State Marble about it and he said he had just the ticket for me. He had it ready the next day and I installed the product in four hours.

The situation was a nice tub, and ugly tile walls. There were some loose tiles, badly stained grout and gross caulking. I removed the loose tiles, dug out the caulking, and cleaned the tile. Bill was given the measurements of the tile surfaces and he pre-cut the panels for me and made up the trim. I picked them up and headed for the job.

I had bill over size the panels a bit just to be safe. They are made out of a fairly lightweight backer material, some sort of plastic, with a color layer and then a clear acrylic layer over the top. Total thickness is about 1/4 of an inch. The trim is the same material, but Bill rolled the edges in a fancy machine that he has to create the overlap trim.

I started by trimming the back panel to fit. I got it in there for a dry fit, removed it and then put a Hershey Kiss size blob of Power Grab adhesive on every other tile, checkerboard style. The Right side panel the same way paying particular attention to getting a nice fit to the tub and the corner. The valve wall panel had to have some holes in it and a 1 1/4" and 4" hole saw easily cut the holes.

About an hour had gone by to this point. Next was the trim. The "L" shaped trim strips overlap the panel and return a finished edge to the sheetrock wall. I used a level and some tape to get everything pre-cut and dry fitted. Then, more glue and a few dabs of hot glue from my electric hot glue gun. The hot glue holds it in place while the adhesive cures. There went hour #2.



I took the next half hour to prep all the new shower trim. I found a replacement cover for the valve (not shown installed), a new handle, shower neck, trim and head, and a new tub spout. I put the shower head and spout on and put clear Polyseamseal around them. Then the fun part. OK, not fun.

When I put the valve trim on and checked for leaks, I had one. The cartridge in the valve was leaking. I went and got one, and made the switch. There went another hour (that could have been avoided by the way if I would have checked it out better first.).

Lastly I put more clear down the corners, and where the trim overlapped the panels. White Polyseamseal was used to seal the panels to the tub and the walls. Done and cleaned up in 4 hours. It dried over night and was ready to use the next morning and worked great. Total cost \$600. If you want more info on this product, contact Bill at Gem State Marble- 459-2450. Now I want to do more of these!



Star Independent Newspaper Column

By Joe Prin

Published 4-15-2009

Recycling building materials has benefits for two ends of the chain.

As a remodeling contractor, I often have to tear out so very usable materials to make way for new items. Past projects have generated kitchen appliances, windows, flooring, doors and trim, cabinets, sinks and plumbing fixtures, lighting, ceiling fans and countertops.

There are also leftovers that while new, are not enough of any one thing for a full project, but could be just the thing for someone doing a small upgrade or repair. Hardwood flooring, tile, and siding and shingles come to mind.

When I see that something is going to be removed or not used up, I try to handle it carefully and complete so that it can be saved for recycling and reuse. I take extra care to remove it, set it aside in a protected area, and then haul it to Second Chance Building Materials at 15th and Grove in downtown Boise.

The people at Second Chance accept the items and then put them in the store there for resale with the proceeds going to fund their operation and mission objectives. They are a non-profit. It is also a fun place for me to shop and pick up things for my own house and garage / shop projects.



Free Stuff!
From The
HOMEFIX
Club!
Mailings of prize packs will go out mid month. Be watching your mailbox, you may be one of this month's winners!

I needed a new microwave in our kitchen recently and they had one that I scored for \$25! It has been perfect for over a year so far and saved me hundreds of dollars. I also found several hardware items that I could use, a couple of storage cabinets, some chain link fencing and gates, and some closet doors that I could use. The prices are very reasonable and I know that I am helping them out as well as my self.

So, as you make improvements and repairs to your own homes, if you have building materials and items that you no longer can use, but would have value to someone else, consider going to the little bit of extra effort to recycle them through the Second Chance system.

And it gets even easier. At the Ada County Landfill, Second Chance has set up a collection area so that when you are making a dump run, if you have some items for them, you can drop them off in their area (it is up by the wood chipper / recycling area) and save your self a trip to downtown Boise. If in doubt if they can use it, leave it here and they will determine the outcome.

You can get a tax receipt for your donation if you would like at the 15th and Grove location.

Also at the Landfill is the Household Hazardous Waste collection site. This is where you take the things that should not get into the landfill. It is open on Friday and Saturdays. You can also go inside and look through the rack of usable things they have collected. And take what you need! I get spray paints, interesting colors of house paints and stains for projects, lawn and garden supplies, and car wash and detail items.



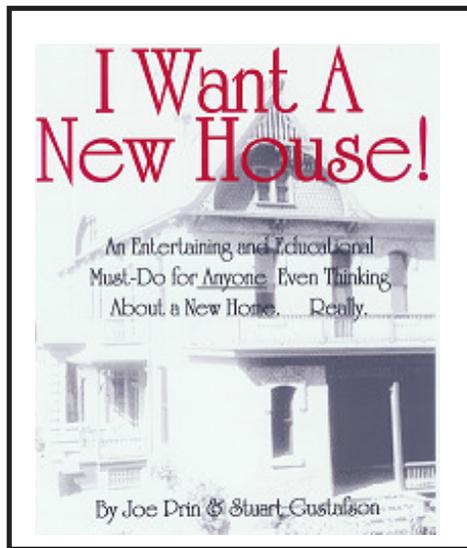
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Who Should Be In The HomeFix Club?

Do you know someone that should be in the HomeFix Club? If so, you, being one of the Charter Members, have earned the right to submit up to 5 names and email addresses. Pick good people and let them know that you are signing them up. It's no fun on my end to get back "Get me off your list! I don't know you or want to know you!"

And, I am giving you permission to forward this newsletter on to anybody you know that may enjoy it. Send your nominations to joe@joeprin.com and put HomeFix Club in the subject line. Thanks!

Check out www.joeprin.com Today!



Book sales continue to come in and to those of you who have recommended this book to your associates, family, and friends, my thanks. I am hearing that it is doing as intended and helping people figure out what they want in their next house and how to go about getting it and coming out without a divorce, over budget, disappointed, or fearful. As you experience the process outlined in the book, let me know how it goes for you and any stories you can share. Who knows, they may make it into future printings of the book!

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Expires July 28, 2009

Brilliant!



**This ought to
work real good!**

An Elite Club Open To Anyone Interested In Making Their Homes Better And Having More Fun Doing It

From Joe...

My sincere and much appreciated thanks to those of you who have sent notes and suggestions on how to make this newsletter better and more entertaining. Thank you for the time you have taken to help me out and I am glad you are enjoying it. I'll do what I can to incorporate your input. Fixing my grammar and sentence structure might be a losing battle though. But I will try. Really.

You may have noticed that in the PDF format I send this in, the last page comes up on your screen first and the first page is last. I gave up trying to fix this one. I guess it is that way so if you print it out, the first page ends up on top. Also the photos may look better when you print it out than they do on your screen. Haven't figured out that one either.

There was a nice complement that came in from a HomeFix Club member and I had to think twice about saying anything about it. Personally, I have a somewhat hard time tooting my own horn. Seems a bit bragadocious. But, it is business related so... She said how many good experiences she has had by using the contractors and suppliers she hears about on the radio show and off my on-line Resource Directory. And she thanked me for providing good information.

Mary, you are welcome. And, for future reference, I am counting on you and everybody else to keep me posted (good and bad) about your interactions with those on the list. Things change, people change, and I need to hear both the positive and the negative so I can keep the list current and something we all can be proud of and willing to hand out to friends and family. **Note to people on the list:** Go the extra mile for HomeFix customers! They are watching you. Treat them better than any other customers you have. And thank them for it.

From Club Member John. New Redneck Photos! Finally!

