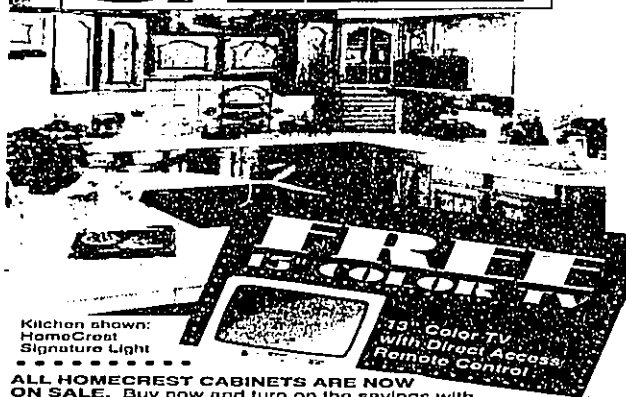


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LET'S REMODEL

# Sprinkler needs to be winterized

**Q.** We just purchased a home with an automatic underground sprinkler system. Is there anything we should do to the system before winter?

**A.** Very simply: Yes. Your system needs to be winterized!

First, let's define the sprinkler system. A lawn sprinkler system is a rather straightforward combination of basic materials and equipment. They are put together with a reasonable amount of study and planning, which assures the practical application of those components. That application is to water your lawn and landscaping with maximum coverage and minimum water usage.

The proper shut down in the fall for a sprinkler system is called a winterization. Winterizing is the removal of water from the sprinkler system. The water is removed by hooking an air compressor to the irrigation system and blowing out the water through the sprinkler heads.

If the water isn't removed, it will freeze and expand into the irrigation system, breaking the pipes, valves and backflow preventers. Without proper winterization, irrigation system owners face the possibility of expensive and unnecessary repairs the following season.

The next step is contacting the proper company to do the work. By using the right techniques and the right tools, an irrigation contractor can properly flush out a sprinkler system, eliminating the chances of damage due to freezing. Consider these steps in choosing an irrigation contractor:

- Choose a full-time irrigation company that specializes in service.
  - Be sure they are a local contractor with an established business location.
  - Check to see if they are insured.
  - Be sure you receive a written work order and a receipt for work performed.
  - Be sure you receive a written work order and a receipt for work performed.
  - Be sure they warranty their work against spring start-up damage.
- Always pay by check and the check should be written to a company, not an individual. You can expect to be



charged in the range of \$40 to \$60 for the average residential site. Don't be taken in by the land sharks who drive through the neighborhoods offering the super low rates for cash-only deals. Often their work is inferior and they can't be found in the spring when the damage is discovered. Remember, a legitimate contractor will always give you a business card and a receipt for work done. This type of contractor wants you to call them in the spring when it is time to turn the system on again. Good luck!

Jim Mastrangel, Rain Dance Irrigation, Union Lake, 810-543-8890

For your home improvement questions or a copy of our roster book, or to have the association speak at a program, call Gayle Walters, executive director of the NARI-Michigan Remodeling Association at 810-335-3232. Questions can be mailed to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320.

Answers are provided by members of the MRA, the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry. Members include professional contractors, manufacturers, wholesalers, consultants, and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling.

Members also answer questions on "Home Improvement Radio" with Murray Gula on WEXL-AM 1340, 1-2 p.m. Saturdays. Call in your questions at 810-544-1340.

## Sewing expo gives decorating tips

The American Stitches Expo offers a variety of events related to the fashion sewing, quilting and needle arts.

The expo will take place Friday-Sunday, Oct. 4-6, in the Novi Expo Center in Novi. Call (810) 889-3111 for information. Among the sessions:

Learn to create custom-made cornice valances in a one-hour seminar taught by Lynn McCabe, home decor consul-

tant with Haberman Fabrics, 1:15 p.m. daily. Cost is \$10. Call (800) 594-9029 for information.

An easy and affordable way to update a room is by sewing your own designer pillows. Learn inspiring techniques in a one-hour seminar taught by Amy Doggett of the Viking Sewing Machine Company 2:30 p.m. daily. Cost is \$10. Call (800) 594-9029.