



P.O. Box 3956, Champaign, IL 61826-3956

TODAY'S PROMPT PAYMENT,
BUILDS TOMORROW'S CREDIT!

**TODAY'S PROMPT PAYMENT,
BUILDS TOMORROW'S CREDIT!**



April Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 1. Paying You Rent 'On Time' is Important!**
- 2. Outdoor dryer vent cover could be source of draft.**
- 3. Warm weather tips**

Clock's Have Been Changed, Now it's Time to Change Your Batteries

Recently you moved your clocks forward because of daylight savings time. This shift in time also serves as a reminder to install new batteries in ALL your smoke detectors AND your CO2 detectors! In addition, it is a good idea for you to check the batteries in your hazard warning radios and all the flash lights in your home.

Paying Your Rent 'On Time' is Important!

Occasionally we all have cash flow problems. At some point we have to decide who to pay and who to put off paying until a later date. Not only is this a difficult decision that no one wants to make, but it can affect our credit score. It can also be very expensive to not pay your rent on time due to late fees and lost discounts. Obviously your most important bill to pay each month is your rent. If you lose your home you eventually lose everything.

We report all activity with our tenants to the credit bureau. Paying us late can decrease your credit score and affect your ability to buy a house, car, boat, etc. Paying us on time is a good way to build and maintain your credit. Please remember, "Today's Prompt Payment Builds Tomorrow's Credit"

If you anticipate a problem paying your rent, remember there are agencies listed on our website that may help. Also, consider the following ideas to help you avoid late fees and lost discounts:

1. A short term loan from relatives, friends or your employer
2. Cash advance on your credit card
3. Cash advance from Title Loan Companies & Payday Loan Companies
4. Sell something! (Car, boat, jet ski, shot gun, motorcycle, services, etc.)

Finally, the most important thing is communication. If you do not talk to us about your situation, we can only assume the worst (that you are not going to pay your rent). This leaves us no other option than to serve you with a 5 day notice to pay or move out. We would rather work through your problem with you and get you back on a solid footing (paying rent on time). We value you as a tenant and hope that we can continue to serve you in the future.

Dryer vent could be source of drafts

Q: The laundry area in my house is chilly and drafty at times. Also, the dryer doesn't seem to dry as quickly as it used to. Could the outdoor dryer cover, which looks pretty old, be causing this?

A: A clothes dryer is one of the major energy consumers in most homes. When a dryer or its venting system aren't working properly, your utility bills will increase. A dryer uses energy for heat and to operate the motor, plus it draws heated air from your home.

The old outdoor dryer vent is the first place to check. If it doesn't close completely when the dryer goes off, this might cause drafts in your laundry room. When it doesn't close during winter, cold air has a direct path into your house. This also might allow allergens and insects into your home.

If the dryer vent's cover is stuck in a partially opened position, the airflow through the dryer is restricted, and this increases the drying time significantly.

Also check the path of the flexible duct from the dryer to the outdoor cover. If you have pushed your dryer too far back against the wall, the duct might get crimped. A sharp bend

can reduce airflow.

Reduced airflow through the dryer duct can result in a buildup of lint, which further reduces the airflow. With the reduced airflow, the air temperature can increase to the point of starting a lint fire. While inspecting the duct and outdoor cover, clean out any lint.

I use a floating-cap type of outdoor vent cover in my home.

Instead of relying on many hinged slats to open and close properly, the floating plastic cap rests over the vent outlet when the dryer shuts off. It provides an excellent seal against outdoor air and insects.

The top cover snaps off, so it's easy to clean any lint that builds up on the cap.

Another option is a draft stopper that is placed in the duct indoors. It effectively is a vent cover mounted indoors.

If the dryer vent is pinched, consider installing a vertical rectangular telescoping duct extension. It's only 3 inches deep and extends above the dryer. The dryer duct is then attached above the dryer.

The following companies offer vent products for dryers:

This floating-cap dryer vent is made of durable plastic which can be painted to match the house wall.



Deflecto (1-800-428-4328, www.deflecto.com); Dundas Jafine (1-800-387-2578, www.dundasjafine.com); In-O-Vate Technologies (1-888-443-7937, www.dryerbox.com); Heartland Products (1-888-772-2345, www.heartlandnatural.com); and Lambro Industries (1-800-645-2860, www.lambro.net).

Warmer weather on horizon prompts to-do list

The seasons wax and wane. We experience rakes and rain. Spring is almost here, according to the calendar; but the weather has us on a temperature roller coaster ride. Rising warm spring temperatures fuel our sense of omnipotence in our gardens. Then a cold wave slaps us back into the reality of spring weather.

Rolling temperatures bring questions about when to do what, so get out your red pen and start checking.

GENERAL

The average last frost date is approximately April 21st. For tender plants such as impatiens, coleus, canna, basil and tomatoes, wait until after May 10th before planting. (You will probably plant them the first nice day in April, but, hey, I tried to warn you).

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Finish pruning apples and grape vines.

Plant hardy vegetables such as Kale, leaf lettuce, potatoes, spinach and turnips..

TREES AND SHRUBS

Prune trees and summer flowering shrubs while still dormant. Many shrubs can be reduced in size by using renewal or heading-back methods. Sterilize tools in between each cut with 10 percent bleach when pruning diseased plants. Summer flowering shrubs bloom on new wood after mid June. Renewal pruning method is the removal of the oldest stems, leaving the younger stems to develop.

Wait to prune early flowering forsythia and lilac until after flowering.

If needed, rejuvenate shrubs such as Anthony Waterer spirea, honeysuckle, redbud, dogwood and privet by cutting stems down to 4 to 6 inches.

Transplant or plant trees and shrubs. Plants preferring spring transplant over fall include most oak, birch, bald cypress, dogwood and magnolia.

Inspect trees with a past history of tent caterpillar. Look for dark brown or gray egg masses that encircle the twig. Destroy by pruning or scratching off with thumbnail.

Apply dormant oil spray to euonymus to control the insect euonymus scale. Dormant oil sprays will also give partial control of pine needle scale. Temperatures should be above freezing for 24 hours after spraying.

Some scall species such as oystershell scale are not controlled by dormant oil sprays. Get accurate identification of insect to determine control program.

FLOWERS

Clean up any plant debris that wasn't removed last fall. Gradually pull back mulch from plant crowns.

Cut back ornamental grasses to 4 to 6 inches before growth starts. The cool season grasses such as Feather Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis x acutiflora*) green up quickly in spring, so don't wait. The popular *Miscanthus* cultivars are warm season grasses, so a little more time is available to prune them.

Gradually pull back mulch from roses in late March or early April.

Be on the lookout for rabbit damage on newly emerging perennials and spring bulbs. Fencing or inverted wire mesh baskets provide the only complete protection. Repellants may give some control.

LAWNS

Wait until broadleaf weeds are actively growing before treating with postemergence herbicides.

Get the lawn mower ready. Sharpen blades, change oil and clean air filter.

Wait until late April to early May for first fertilizer application.

Rake up any twigs and debris.

