

READY FOR WINTER?

5 Tips To Minimize Those Heating Bills

November 2012

With the cool nights upon us and winter just around the corner, now is the time to winterize your home and to consider eco-friendly heating alternatives to save money...and to minimize your environmental footprint.

To start the process, do a thorough “walk-thru” of your home.

1. Check each door and window. Do you feel any cold air coming in? If so, determine if you need weather-stripping or caulk. Do you have thermal windows and doors? Replace them, if not.

2. Prevent frozen pipe damage by turning the water off in the house at each hook-up, drain hose bibs and place thermal covers on them. Or replace the spigots completely with a model that turns the water off in the house from the hose hook-up itself.

3. Clean gutters to be sure they are free of debris. Consider gutter guards if you have a lot of leaves.

4. If you have any rooms that seem colder than the rest, think about extra insulation.

5. Inspect your furnace or heat-pump filter to be sure it's clean; replace if it's not washable.

You may also want to consider alternative heat sources. While many people burn wood or use pellets in their heating stoves, there is an all-natural product on the market that burns very hot and can be used in any non-gas fireplace or woodstove.



BioFlame briquettes are made on Vancouver Island and environmentally friendly. Available in individual bags or by the pallet.

BioFlame Briquettes, made in Chemainus, are growing in popularity with many island residents. The briquettes are made of 100% recycled sawdust. They have no artificial chemicals, produce minimal smoke and ash, and are high in energy efficiency.

The bags of bricks are available in two sizes (16 or 32 briquettes). To stock up for the season, you should contact Black Creek Farm & Feed, which offers a quantity discount and delivery for a pallet (1152 bricks). The bricks are easy to store and are wrapped in plastic for clean, easy transport.

According to the BioFlame website, burning the briquettes as fuel “closes a natural conservation cycle—on combustion, they only release as much carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere as was originally absorbed by the growing

tree during photosynthesis.”

The company also notes that the minimal sparking is ideal for people who camp or burn outdoor fires in dry periods.

And, don't forget about your walkways and driveway. Be sure you have salt or ice-melt on hand for below-freezing weather. If you have farm animals, be sure your water heater/de-icer is in good working order before the thermometer drops.

