

THE Homesteader®

NORTHERN COLORADO EDITION

THE PUBLICATION FOR NEW HOMEOWNERS

Welcome to the Area!

Local Business Directory...Page 5



Stop those leaks! Air sealing is key to energy efficiency

By Dusty Mosness

HOMEOWNERS! Did you know that heating and cooling costs account for about 1/2 of a home's total energy bills?!!!! HALF! Of this cost, almost 1/3 or MORE can be attributed to air infiltration (aka LEAKS) alone! Now, if I were to ask you where the majority of these air leaks occur, what would you say?..... No, windows are not it. As a matter of fact, windows are typically only 10% of the problem. The other 90% occurs throughout the house in places such as ceilings, walls, floors, etc. According to Energy Star, it is the sealing of these leaks – improving your home's "envelope" or "shell" – that is often the most cost-effective way to improve your home's energy efficiency and comfort.

How do you know if your home is leaking air? Unfortunately, most homes - old and new - have large amounts of air leakage. However, there are some "signs" of common home problems that may

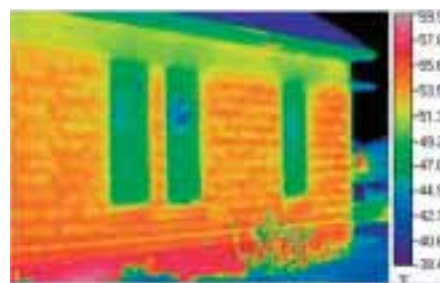
indicate air leakage. The most obvious sign is that of a "chilly" or "drafty" feeling in the home or a room. Unless you purposefully left a window or door open, a draft is evidence of air leakage. Other signs can include:

- High energy bills
- Cold floors in winter
- Moisture on windows
- Ice dams
- Excessive dust
- Hot or cold rooms
- Dry indoor air in the winter

If you have experienced any of these problems with your home, you may have an air leakage problem.

Homeowners are often concerned about sealing their home too tightly. However, when you air seal a home, you are only stopping the infiltration (leakage) that is entering uncontrollably through cracks and openings. This is different from ventilation, which is fresh air that enters a house by design, in a controlled

manner. Using a Service that targets your home's unique air leakage, and that uses diagnostic tools to measure the home's actual exchange rate, can provide you with needed information to solve your specific



Infrared photo shows where air leakage is occurring.

problems. Such an inspection can also give you piece of mind regarding proper ventilation and energy efficiency. There are different inspection services available, but those that use infrared imaging are the most effective and efficient.

What's the payoff? Simply sealing a home's thermal envelope can save the typical homeowner an average of 20%-30% on energy costs!

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Don't let the bed bugs bite

By Tom Cornwell

I remember so vividly one of the little sayings my parents would send me off to bed with when I was just a lad. "Goodnight, sleep tight, don't let the Bed Bugs bite!" At the time I thought Bed Bugs were fictitious creatures made up by my parents. Fast forward a number of years, and as a pest management professional I know bed bugs are not fictitious at all and have made a comeback in America over the past few years. So, what are Bed Bugs? Why are they back? And, what can be

done to control them?

Bed Bugs, scientific name Cimex lectularius, belong to the sub-order of insects known as heteroptera (true bugs). Bed Bugs undergo simple metamorphosis. The life cycle begins with the egg, followed by nymphs and then adult. The nymphs resemble the adult stage. Adult Bed Bugs are about 3/16 of an inch long, flat and broadly oval. They are usually brown to reddish brown when engorged after feeding. Bed Bugs are blood feeders and must have a blood meal to molt through the 5 stages of the nymphal process. Females usually lay 1-5 eggs per day with development time egg to adult of 21 days. These insects are prolific breeders!

Bed Bugs are very opportunistic and prefer humans as their host. They hide during the day in small cracks and crevices near their host, and come out at night to feed. The bite they inflict with their proboscis (the mouthpart they use to feed) is painless.

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Find the Fake Ad and WIN PRIZES!
See page 20 for details and August's winners.

Alpacas are a breed apart

By Carl and Ann Bradbury

Alpacas are without a doubt one of the most beautiful animals that roam our planet earth. Just the facts that alpacas come in 22 different colors makes them unique, but add to that their gentle nature, tranquil temperament, luxurious fiber, and gentle, calming humming sounds and you have an animal that no human can resist hugging.

The natural habitat of the alpaca is the high Andes of South America, but since 1984 they have also flourished on farms throughout the United States because they are so adaptable.

There are two different kinds of alpacas in the United States--the suri alpaca which has fiber that appears to be in the form of dreadlocks and is very silky, and the huacaya (pronounced wa-ki-a) alpaca which has very colorful fiber that is



extremely fine and gives the alpaca a woolly and round appearance.

Alpacas prefer outdoors to being cooped up in a barn so a three-sided shed is perfect. You provide an enclosed barn for birthing. They eat very little food each day, usually as much as a large dog. We feed them grass, good quality grass hays (some alfalfa is fine), and a special alpaca crumble. They need hay and/or grass for the fiber it contains. You give alpacas annual inoculations and worm them as you would your dog or cat.

LIFESPAN
15-25 years

AVERAGE HEIGHT
36" at the withers

AVERAGE WEIGHT

100 to 175 pounds or about one-half to one-third the size of a llama

AVERAGE GESTATION
335 days

BIRTH

Birth weight is usually around 15 to 19 pounds. Babies can often stand and nurse within 30 minutes to one hour. Infant mortality is very low.

COLOR

Alpacas usually come in solid colors with many variations and blends.

Alpacas are the world's finest livestock investment

Looking to add some fiber to your investment diet?

Alpacas produce a premium fiber in 22 vibrant colors, the demand for which is ever increasing. Annual fiber yields vary from about five pounds from a single female to a reported thirteen pounds from a larger male.

Breeding and selling in this ever increasingly popular industry is another easy way to add to your investment dollars!

Due to a high demand for these beautiful animals, it is common for a female offspring of an alpaca to sell for the same price or more than an investor breeder paid for the dam.

Returns of 30 to 74% are not uncommon in the alpaca industry.

Not to be overlooked as a very important aspect of raising alpacas are the great tax benefits that our favorite uncle Sam now provides. An alpaca can typically be depreciated over a five-year span or 20% per year and, in addition, the 2006 and later tax-years Section 179 of the tax code allows for the deduction of a capital asset up to \$108,000 in the first year the asset is acquired. Capital gains can be available on the sale of breeding animals and their offspring. Current expenses are deductible. Consult a tax advisor for specifics as they relate to you.

Add to all of this that alpacas are 100% insurable. Can stocks do all of this?

All you need is love

Alpacas are so easy to raise, practically all you need to give them is love. They eat very little food and therefore require only a small amount of acreage per animal. Veterinary costs are minimal. Besides their endearing qualities of warmth, friendliness, and trainability, they have an enduring quality of strength and toughness. That means you'll have a friend for a long time to come. Coming from the rugged Andes makes life on the farm a piece of cake...for your alpaca and for you!

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Alpacas are a breed apart

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The many benefits of breeding

As your alpaca herd breeds and grows, the return on your initial investment multiplies at a strong and steady rate. Along the way, you'll receive numerous tax benefits and incentives that make your investment even more

attractive! Deductible expenses, capital gains benefits, and insurable, depreciable investments are just a few of the many ways you can save money while also taking part in one of the most exciting industries in the world.

Alpacas are so easy to raise, practically all you need to give them is love. They eat very little food and therefore require only a small amount of acreage per

animal. Veterinary costs are minimal. Besides their endearing qualities of warmth, friendliness, and trainability, they have an enduring quality of strength and toughness. That means you'll have a friend for a long time to come. Coming from the rugged Andes makes life on the farm a piece of cake...for your alpaca and for you!

Alpacas are so personable that you cannot resist being around them. Alpacas have no teeth on top in the front and do not bite, have soft padded, earth-friendly feet, and a non-aggressive personality, all of which make them an adorable farm animal or

pet. Listen to their gentle humming and let the alpaca transport you into a new lifestyle of peace and tranquility.

On September 29 and 30, alpaca breeders from across the United States and Canada will invite the public to come to their farm or ranch to meet their alpacas and learn more about these inquisitive, unique animals. Go to www.nationalalpacafarmday.com.

Carl & Ann Bradbury are owners of Ridge Valley Alpaca Ranch in Loveland. They may be reached at 970-669-0043 or www.alpacarancher.net.

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Need electricity to really cool attic

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

The soffits must be the place the air enters the attic to replace all of the air being discharged by the fans.

If the fans can't satisfy their appetite for air from the soffits, they will begin to draw it from the inside of your home. You will be sending expensive air-conditioned air from your living areas into your attic. This is a very bad idea, and it can hurt you financially.

Air leaks from your home up into your attic can be found fairly quickly if you have fiberglass insulation. Pull back batts and look for dirty spots in the insulation. This is often dirt that is in the air coming from your home. The fiberglass batts act just like a furnace air filter.

All of Tim's past columns and videos are available at AsktheBuilder.com. Discover answers to thousands of questions. Subscribe to get FREE alerts each time a new video or column is uploaded to AsktheBuilder.com.

Fall-planted bulbs and corms

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

- Aeration is the most important aspect of soil preparation. Before the soil is shoveled back into the bed, mix it with some type of organic matter. Space the bulbs as desired, refill the bed and water to settle the soil around the bulbs.
- The flower bud and the food necessary to produce the flower are present inside a bulb when it is planted. Fertilizer is applied to make larger bulbs the following year.
- Apply phosphorus fertilizer at planting time so it is available to the roots, because it does not translocate in the soil. Adequate phosphorus may be supplied with 1/2 pound of 0-46-0 fertilizer (super phosphate) per 100 square feet.

- To improve the texture of the soil, add peat moss or well-decomposed compost using up to one-third of the volume of soil removed from the bed as described. Soil amended in this way offers less resistance to the shoot as it emerges and provides better aeration and drainage for root growth.
- Soils with a high clay content should be heavily amended.

J.E. Ells, Colorado State University Extension vegetable crop specialist and associate professor; and J.R. Feucht, Extension landscape plants specialist and professor; horticulture (both retired). 6/97.

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