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# WINTER NEWSLETTER

Winter is here and we'd like to take the time to not only thank you for being a continued customer of ours, but also to offer some helpful information to you and your family for the upcoming months. Included in our winter issue:

- Energy Savings For You & Your Home
- 5 Simple Ways to Winter-proof Your Home
- Gingerbread Man Cookies Recipe
- Caring for Your Furnace

## 5 Simple Ways to Winter-proof Your Home

When cool temperatures begin to creep in, it's time to take care of a few items that can make a big difference in your comfort & wallet. When you winter-proof your home following these simple steps, you'll save your home from wear & tear that can lower your property value & also save money on energy bills.

1. **Seal window & door jams.** First check for leaks around the doors & windows. According to experts,

leaky windows & doors can increase heating bills by at least 10%. Check for leaks simply by holding the back of your hand to the cracks around your doors & windows. The back of your hand is more sensitive than the palm. Use weather stripping & caulking to take care of drafts.

2. **Inspect & seal ductwork.** Leaky ductwork can make heat flow into the attic, which is a waste of heat & money. The minor cost associated

with sealing ductwork is negligible when compared to the money you'll save on your heating bills.

3. **Check your furnace.** Having your furnace serviced by a HVAC professional to keep this important piece of equipment running is an important step in winterizing your home. For more tips, check CARING FOR YOUR FURNACE on the back.

4. **Prepare the top of your home.** Clean the gutters. Inspect the roof

for missing tiles or loose shingles & repair as needed. Examine & fix cracks in the chimney.

5. **Protect your air conditioner.** Cover the AC unit with plastic insulation to protect it from cold weather damage & to help prevent heat loss from inside your home.

These simple steps will help your home stay in great shape throughout the winter, help keep you comfortable & save you money at the same time.

## ENERGY SAVINGS to reduce utility costs..

Remember these simple steps around the house and yard:

- Keep air vents, baseboard heaters and radiators unrestricted by furniture, carpet or curtains. It makes the air flow more easily. If baseboard heaters have movable vents, keep them open during the winter and closed during the summer.
- Keep your oven door tightly closed. Use the oven light to check on progress when baking or roasting. Preheat the oven only when the recipe specifically calls for it.
- Make full use of microwave ovens in all weather. Microwave cooking can reduce energy consumption by two-thirds and produces much less waste heat than your stove. Toaster ovens and slow cookers are also a great way to reduce energy use.
- Schedule annual tune-ups for your heat pump, furnace or boiler. Maintenance checks can help keep this equipment running smoothly and efficiently.

• Shorter days mean longer nights. Don't forget to adjust your outdoor lighting timers. You'll save money and extend bulb life.

• Consider using electric grass and hedge trimmers instead of gas-powered trimmers. (Especially with fluctuating gas prices) Well-maintained manual trimmers are preferred by many expert gardeners and professionals.

• Plan your garden with the changing seasons in mind. Shelter the south side of your home from sun with deciduous trees. Evergreens will protect the north side of your home from icy blasts.

**If you'd like to increase the efficiency on your AC or Furnace system and lower your utility costs, contact us for more information.**

# Gingerbread Man Cookies

**Start to Finish:** Approx. 2 hrs  
**Makes:** 16 cookies

**Crust Ingredients:**

- 1 Tbsp ground ginger
- 1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp finely ground pepper

**Filling Ingredients:**

- 3 1/4 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 3/4 tsp baking soda
- 3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup dark-brown sugar, packed
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup unsulfured molasses
- Optional: raisins, chocolate chips, candy pieces, frosting

**Easy to Follow Directions:**

- In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, and spices. Set aside.
- In an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter. Add sugar and beat until fluffy. Mix in eggs and molasses. Gradually add the flour mixture; combine on low speed. (You may need to work it with your hands to incorporate the last bit of flour.)
- Divide dough into thirds; wrap each third in plastic. Chill for at least 1 hour overnight. Before rolling out, let sit at room temperature for 5-10 minutes.
- Heat oven to 350 °. Place dough third on a large piece of lightly floured parchment paper or wax paper. Using a rolling pin, roll dough 1/8 inch thick. Refrigerate

again for 5-10 minutes to make it easier to cut out the cookies. Use a cookie cutter to cut out cookies from dough. Press raisins, chocolate chips, or candy pieces in the center of each cookie if desired for "buttons".

- Transfer to ungreased baking sheets. Bake until crisp but not darkened, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from oven. Let sit for a few minutes and then use a metal spatula to transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely. Decorate with frosting and other treats as desired.



## CARING FOR YOUR FURNACE

**KEEP UNIT FREE FROM ALL DEBRIS:**

Anything obstructing the unit will prevent it from dissipating heat as effectively, making the unit work harder. This wastes energy and money.

**CLEAN AND LUBRICATE BLOWER MOTOR ASSEMBLY:**

To keep proper air flow, the blower motor assembly should be removed, cleaned, and lubricated if the area around it is dirty. This will promote proper air flow and lower noise.

**KEEP YOUR THERMOSTAT CALIBRATED:**

If your furnace is cycling on and off more frequently than normal, your thermostat may be out of calibration or your filters may be dirty/need replacing. Adjust your thermostats calibration and clean the filters to lower energy usage.

**REMOVE THE FURNACE FRONT PANEL AND CHECK THE COLOR OF THE FLAME:**

If the color of the flame is a varied orange and yellow, the gas section is not operating properly. The burners and orifices might be dirty and professional servicing may be necessary.

**IS YOUR UTILITY BILL INCREASING ABNORMALLY?:**

If you notice an abnormal increase in your utility bill, your furnace may not be operating at its peak performance level.

*FREE SAFETY INSPECTION*  
 on furnaces 15 years and older  
 (excluding wall & floor heaters)  
*Make your home more energy efficient!*  
 Now offering duct pressure testing & insulation for your home! Call for details: 707-361-4841

**Unbeatable comfort, unmatched quality**

For the top of the line in cool comfort for your family, look no further. The XL19i is among the industry's most efficient air conditioners available. What does that mean for you? It means



you'll enjoy a total comfort even on the hottest days of the year while lowering your cooling costs at the same time.

**Call A-1 Guaranteed for all your home comfort needs. We can help lower your utility costs with our Guaranteed Best Prices.**

**Call: 707-361-4841 for your Free In-Home Estimate. se habla espanol**

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<http://www.facebook.com/a1guaranteed>  
<http://twitter.com/A1Guaranteed>

**COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS**

Loma Vista Farm Christmas Tree and See's Candy sale. Starts November 26th - December 22nd 2 - 6 PM 150 Rainer Ave Vallejo. Call 707 642 4925 for details.

Holiday Open House including 10 vendors! Holiday shopping made easy and in one spot. Avon, Mary Kay, Premier Jewelry, Dog Products, Pampered Chef, Ribbon Gifts, Crafts, Scentsy Candles, Gold Rep and more. Friday Dec 3 at A-1 Guaranteed's office. 1768 Broadway 6:00 - 9:00 pm. Call for details 707 645 0734.

13th Annual Global Holiday Faire December 4 9:00-3:00 Vallejo Christian Church 1035 Indiana St. encourages the practice of alternative gift-giving by making a variety of donation cards & merchandise created by third-world artisans and by non-profits. Funds raised are divided between three local organizations and one international organization. Lunch, baked goods, crafts & gift baskets available for sale. Entertainment provided. Call for details 707 649 7973

Vallejo Little League Restaurant Fundraising Event Week. Why make lunch, dinner or even dessert when you can have fun with friends & support our local vendors. Each vendor will donate a portion of the profits to the league. Mon. Dec 6 (DINNER) 5-9pm THE FIX 48 Springs Road, Vallejo / Tues. Dec 7 (ALL DAY) 11am - 10pm - CHEVY'S 57 Plaza Drive, Vallejo / Wed. Dec. 8 (LUNCH/DINNER) 2-9pm RUBIO'S 173 Plaza Drive #105, Vallejo / Thurs. Dec. 9 (DESSERT) 5-9pm BASKIN ROBBINS 1658 Tennessee St, Vallejo. BE SURE TO MENTION VALLEJO LITTLE LEAGUE ON YOUR RECEIPT.

The gospel according to Scrooge Sat. Dec 11, 2:00pm & 6:00pm. Sun. Dec. 12 6:00pm \$5.00 per person. Age 6 and under \$3.00. North Hills Church & Schools. 200 Admiral Callaghan Lane, Vallejo. Purchase tickets in bldg D. Call or e-mail for details 707 644 5286 or church@north-hills.org.

Straits of Mare Island Rowing Assoc. Crab Feed Sat. Jan 29, 2011. 5:30 no host cocktails, 6:30 dinner. Fairfield Community Center 1000 Kentucky St. Fairfield, CA Raffle & Silent Auction. \$40 per ticket call 707 557 4401 for details.

Foster A Dream is in need of 10,000 - 20,000 sq feet between now & Jan 20th for the Annual Holiday Wonderland program serving 1,000 local foster children call for details 925 228 0200

Angel Food Ministries available to Individuals, regardless of income, purchase food on line at [angelfoodministries.com](http://angelfoodministries.com) or at office. Food is distributed at the end of each month on a Sat. Amador Hope Center 929 Amador Street - Vallejo call for details 707 648 1986

Submit your **COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS** to Krissy at [krissyh@a-1guaranteed.com](mailto:krissyh@a-1guaranteed.com)