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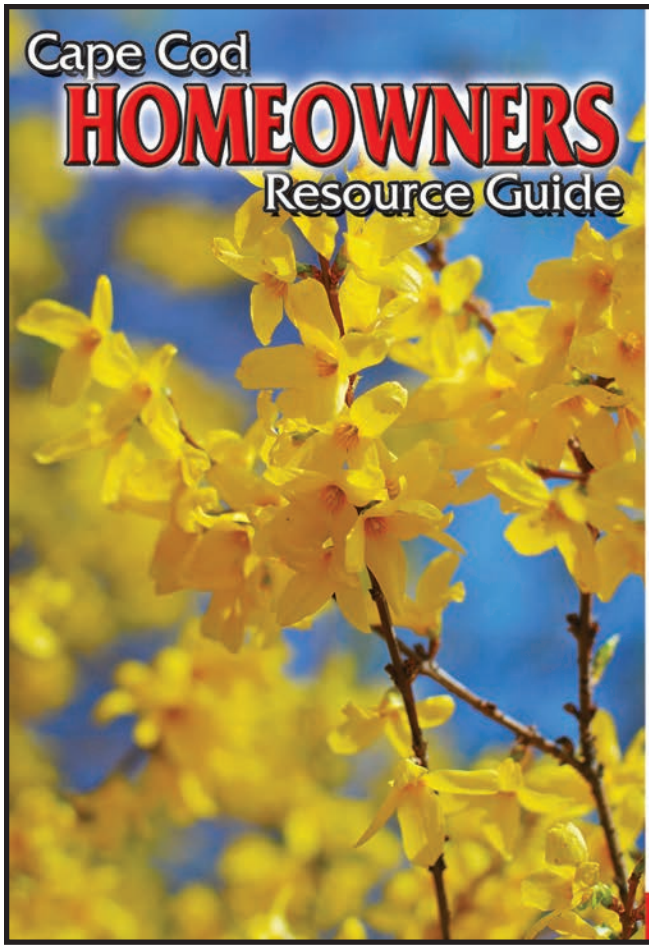

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The Importance of Roof Cleaning

By Zach Maynard

A roof stained with black streaks and darks stains not only detracts from your home's curb appeal, but the shingles are also being damaged, diminishing the life of your roof. Fortunately you can extend the life and beauty of your roof with an algae treatment.

A professional roof cleaning service can safely remove roof stains with non-pressure roof washing combined with environmentally safe, and biodegradable cleaners. It is important to avoid the use of power washers because asphalt shingles are not designed to withstand any pressure, and permanent damage will result. Professional roof cleaning extends the life of your roof, and prevents the expense of roof replacement.

Many Cape Cod homes are affected by roof algae, moss, mold, and mildew. These organisms tend to flourish on the north side of the roof, where the most shade is present, and moisture tends to accumulate. The algae and mold will continue to grow and spread rapidly if the roof is not cleaned and treated, and ultimately it will damage your roof. If the roof is not treated, these stains can cause granule loss, and roof leaks may develop. Not only is the roof at risk of damage, but a roof covered in algae retains heat during the hot summer months, resulting in higher energy bills for cooling expenses.

Make sure that you contact a certified roof cleaning company that has workers comp insurance, general liability insurance, and offers a warranty package with their service. The warranty will verify that they are using a process that actually kills the algae, instead of just cleaning the surface, allowing the algae to return quickly. A proper treatment will kill the algae at the roots, preventing its return for years!

About the Author: Zach Maynard is a certified roof cleaner, and owner of Coastal Softwash.They have cleaned and treated thousands of roofs throughout Cape Cod since 2005. He can be reached at 774-678-4085.

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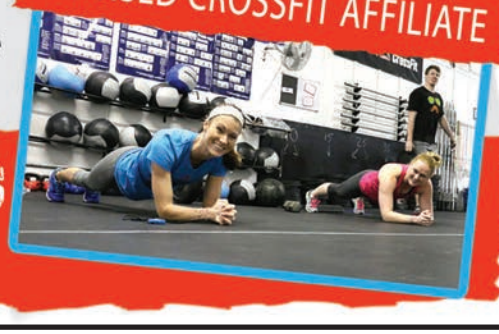

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Save Green

Indoors and Out With Energy-Efficient Home Upgrades

(BPT) - Spring is the perfect time to think green. For some it's spurred by Earth Day, others the renewed greening of our lawns. And many are motivated by the desire to save a little green in their wallets with a fresh new season of home repairs. If you're one of these people, you can help save some green for the planet, as well as your hard-earned cash, by making energy efficient upgrades throughout your home.

Helping the world stay green gained traction with the first Earth Day held on March 22, 1970. As a nation, much has been accomplished with the environmental movement, yet there are also easy things you can do at home to "go green" and save money at the same time. Here are some tips for home energy efficiency upgrades indoors and out.

• **Cool efficiently:** When it comes to home energy bills, heating and cooling accounts for as much as half of the average home's utility costs, according to energy.gov. Get ready for the hottest days of summer by having your heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system tuned up and the filters changed so it's operating efficiently. In addition, if your cooling system is more than 10 years old, consider replacing it with one that has a Seasonal Efficiency Ratio (SEER) of 20.00 for better savings.

• **Programmable temperature controls:** A programmable HVAC control can reduce energy consumption by up to 15 percent compared to traditional nonprogrammable thermostats. Today's HVAC control systems now monitor indoor and outdoor temperatures, plus home energy use over time, to help you manage energy and comfort even further.

• **Conserve water:** Remember, water isn't free. Indoors, lower water bills by installing low-flow water fixtures including toilets, showerheads and faucets. Outdoors, add a water-saving spigot for the garden hose. To avoid water evaporation, water your plants early or late in the day, and when your green lawn starts to grow, don't mow too low. If you have lawn sprinklers, double check that they are set to water grass and shrubbery instead of the driveway or sidewalk. Rather than hose down your deck to clean it, save water by sweeping instead.

• **Lighting:** About 10 percent of the energy your home uses goes to lighting costs, according to energy.gov – in fact, by just replacing five of your home's most frequently used lights with energy efficient ENERGY STAR bulbs, you could save $75 a year in energy costs. Compared with traditional incandescent bulbs, compact fluorescents can yield as much as 75 percent energy savings and last six times longer. You can save even more energy and wasted heat by switching to LEDs. Outdoor lights using CFLs or LEDS save energy, too, so look for ENERGY STAR qualified fixtures designed for outdoor use.

By taking these steps, you can help make the world a little greener, keep your home a little greener, and save even more green where it really hits home – in your wallet.

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Dig Safely This Spring

Underground utility lines run through our yards to deliver electricity, telephone, cable television, gas and water to our homes. Avoiding these lines while digging helps prevent damages that lead to outages and injuries. Be aware that every digging project, no matter how large or small, requires a free call to Dig Safe at 811. Whether you are installing a mailbox or fence, or building a deck or patio, these projects should only begin after calling 811.

What is Dig Safe?

A safe digging project must always start with a call to Dig Safe. It is a not-for-profit clearinghouse that dispatches participating utility companies to mark where their underground lines are buried. This is free service, paid for by participating member utilities.

When should I call Dig Safe?

Even small, shallow jobs are a risk if you don't know where utilities are buried. Call Dig Safe any time you dig, for any type of project.

Landscaping - Fencing - Walkway - Retaining Wall - Clothesline - Irrigation - Dog Fence - Swing Set - Mailbox - Basketball Hoop - Planting - Driveway - Root Removal – Patio

Why should I call Dig Safe?

Damaging an underground facility is dangerous – for you, and for the people around you. A broken pipe or cable also causes inconvenient outages, expensive repairs and legal problems. This is why state law requires a call to 811, even for property owners digging on private land.

How far in advance do I call?

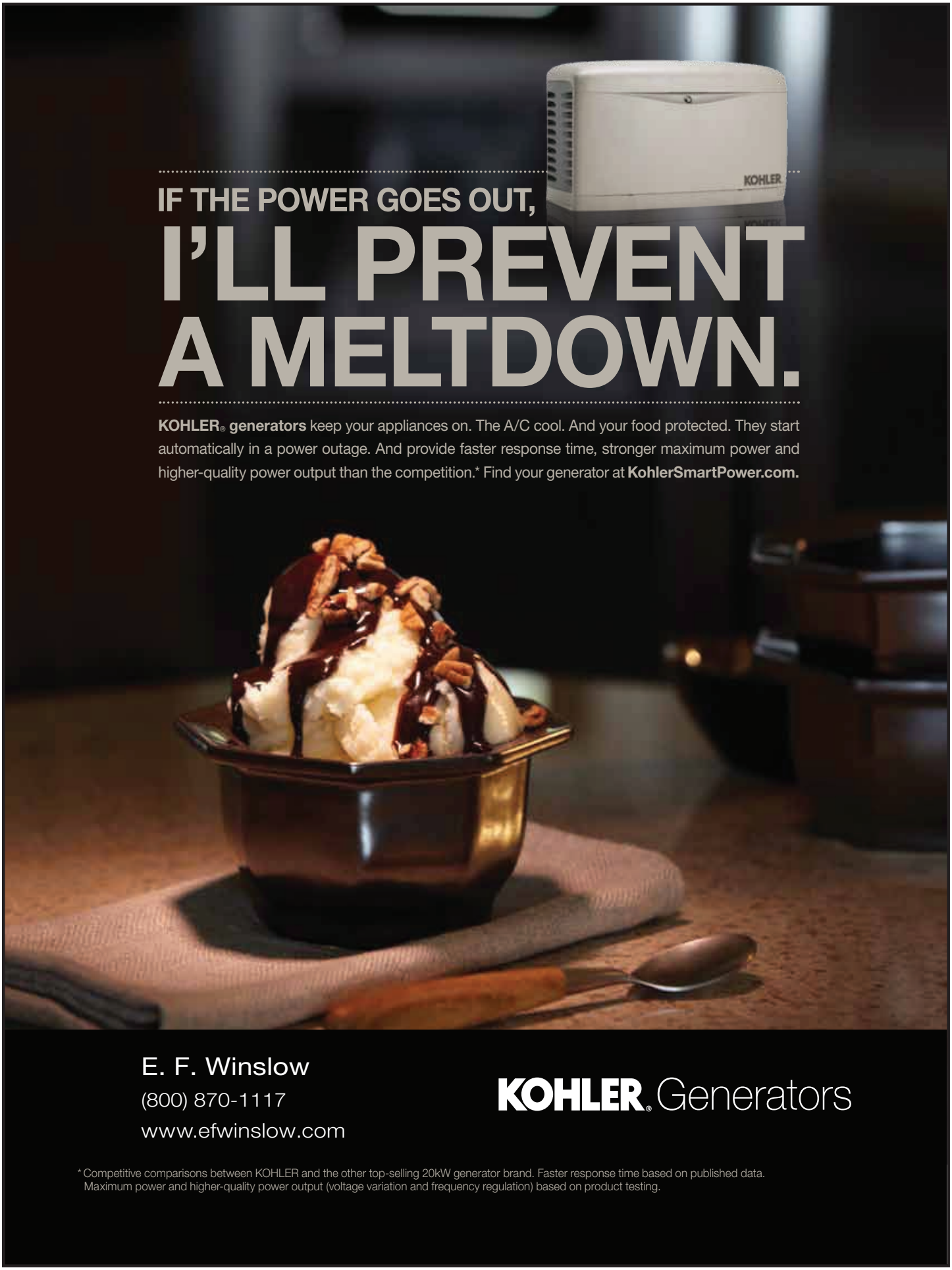
Massachusetts law requires at least 72 hours notice, excluding weekends and holidays. You must also "pre-mark" the area where you plan to dig before calling, using white stakes, paint or flags. This helps the locating technician reduce excess markings where you don't need them.

What happens after I call?

The participating utility companies will respond within 72 business hours to mark the location of their underground facilities. You do not need to be home, unless you have specific questions, need to restrain pets, or give the locating technicians access to your property. Underground utilities are marked out with paint, stakes or flags, using a national color coding system.

How much does this service cost?

Dig Safe is a free service, funded solely by its utility members to promote public safety and avoid costly underground utility damage.
Visit www.digsafe.com to find out more information about 811.



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Blinds & Shutters Can Help You Save Money and Energy this Summer

By John Pitera

Energy-efficient window treatments can prevent the loss of up to 50% of a home's heating and cooling energy that may be lost through its windows. They offer increased protection against heat loss during the winter, and are even more effective at minimizing the heat from the sun during the summer which helps reduce your home's energy consumption. With energy efficient window treatments your home will be more comfortable, and you will save on heating & cooling costs.

One of the best ways to insulate your windows is with cellular blinds, which are also known as honeycomb blinds. Cellular blinds work by trapping air within the cells creating a layer of insulation, which serves as a barrier between the window and the room. A double pleated honeycomb blind can reduce the amount of energy loss up to 50%. If you'd like to combine privacy and energy efficiency, honeycomb shades are a great choice.

Plantation shutters are another popular option because of their aesthetic appeal. However, plantation shutters are also energy-efficient. Both wood and vinyl plantation shutters work as effective insulators, although wood is slightly better at resisting temperature conductivity. The shutters are fit snugly into the window frames to block the transfer of heat and create a barrier between outside temperatures and your home's interior.

Cooling your home during the hot days of summer takes a lot of energy. With properly fitted energy efficient window treatments you could save 10% - 15% on your summer cooling costs. You can help keep your home cool by keeping the blinds closed during the day, especially the south and west facing windows which receive the most direct sunlight. Keeping the sunlight out will also protect your furniture and flooring from the fading that results from the sun.

About The Author: John Pitera is the owner of The Blind Man, and has over 28 years of experience helping customers select, measure and install the window solutions they need for their home. He can be reached at jpite@comcast.net or (508) 420-3354

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