

WINTER  
2011

# Homeowner News

News & Information For The Customers Of Pickett Plumbing, L.P.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

\$30 Off Plumbing Service Call

\$200 Giveaway

The Pumpkin Cookie Recipe of Your Dreams

Fire Safety Tips for Holiday Decorating

The CORner



At Pickett Plumbing, we strive to provide the best products and services to our customers at affordable prices. Please contact us for all of your plumbing or water conditioning needs. We are happy to help with installation, maintenance and repairs.

## Tips for Being a Savvy Shopper

To avoid problems and make better decisions, use this checklist BEFORE you make a purchase.

- \* Decide in advance exactly what you want and what you can afford.
- \* Do your research. Ask family, friends, and others you trust for advice based on their experiences. Gather information about the seller and the item or service you are purchasing.
- \* Review product test results and consumer reports.
- \* Get advice and price quotes from several sellers.
- \* Get a written copy of guarantees and warranties. Compare their features.
- \* Get the seller's refund, return, and cancellation policies.
- \* If you think the price displayed isn't right, speak up.
- \* Ask whom to contact if you have a question or problem.
- \* Read and understand any contract or legal document you are asked to sign.
- \* Consider paying by credit card. If you have a problem, you can dispute the charge made on your card.
- \* Don't buy on impulse or under pressure.

from [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov)

## Simple Steps To Reduce Your Family's Impact on the Environment

### Upgrade old, inefficient appliances

Dishwashers, clothes washers, ovens, refrigerators, water heaters, air conditioners, furnaces, boilers, and other major appliances can all run up energy costs quickly if they are not energy efficient or not running at peak performance. It is important to have your major appliances inspected regularly. If you are considering a renovation or upgrade, explore your options.

### Fix refrigerant leaks

Refrigerant is expensive. The longer you put off fixing the leak, the more that's evaporating (not to mention the harm to the environment). Not only that, if moisture enters and reacts with the refrigerant, vital components like the compressor can be damaged and you may end up replacing your entire unit. Even if a total replacement is not required, the efficiency of your unit can be greatly compromised.

### Seal ducts located outside of the building envelope

If you have ducts that run through your garage, attic, basement, or crawlspaces they may be susceptible to extreme temperature deviations from the portion of the home where the temperature is regulated. Sealing and insulating these ducts will result in a reduction of energy consumption.

### Ceiling fans

A ceiling fan can increase evaporation of perspiration from an individual and create the sensation of a cooler environment. Ceiling fans also cost much less to operate

# Breakfast Pumpkin Cookies

Cost Per Recipe: Yield: 48 cookies

\$ 5.78 Ingredients:

Per Serving: 1 3/4 cups pureed pumpkin, cooked

\$ 0.12 1 1/2 cups brown sugar

2 eggs

1/2 cup vegetable oil

1 1/2 cups flour

1 1/4 cups whole wheat flour

1 Tablespoon baking powder

2 teaspoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

1 cup raisins

1 cup walnuts, chopped

## Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Mix pumpkin, brown sugar, eggs, and oil thoroughly.
3. Blend dry ingredients and add to pumpkin mixture.
4. Add raisins and nuts.
5. Drop by teaspoonfuls on greased cookie sheet.
6. Bake 10-12 minutes until golden brown.

Source: <http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov>

## A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety

### Tell Your Friends About Homeowner News

Or call us and we'll provide them with a free subscription and give you and your friend \$10 gift certificates!

### Homeowner News

is a quarterly publication of Pickett Plumbing. It is provided to our customers free of charge. We welcome your suggestions and ideas.

Contact us at:

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Houston, Texas 77269-0945  
713-896-9700  
832-476-8771 fax  
[www.HoustonPlumber.com](http://www.HoustonPlumber.com)

*Each year fires occurring during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 people, injure 1,650 more, and cause over \$990 million in damage. According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), there are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined precautionary tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.*

### Holiday Lights

- **Maintain Your Holiday Lights** Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.
- **Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets** Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch.
- **Do Not Leave Holiday Lights on Unattended**

### Holiday Decorations

- **Use Only Nonflammable Decorations** All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.
- **Never Put Wrapping Paper in a Fireplace** It can result in a very large fire, throwing off dangerous sparks and embers and may result in a chimney fire.
- **Artificial Christmas Trees** If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan.

Brought to you by <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/>





713-896-9700

**\$30 OFF**

## Any Plumbing Repair Job

Make Sure your home is prepared for this season! Call us today to make sure your plumbing is working at its full potential.

Not valid with other offers. Expires 3/31/12.

## Simple Steps to Reduce Your Family's Impact on the Environment

*(continued from page 1)*

than your comfort system. This allows you to set the thermostat higher and still enjoy a comfortable environment. Be sure to turn the fan off when you leave the room.

### **Motion detector light switches**

Are you tired of kids leaving the lights on and wasting money? Install motion activated light switches to automatically turn off lights and conserve energy. They are especially useful in rooms that have ceiling fans, as ceiling fans are only effective if there is someone present in the room to benefit from the air movement.

### **CFLs**

Most people don't pay a lot of attention to what kind of light bulbs they have in their home, as long as they provide adequate lighting. What many don't realize is that they are wasting money using conventional incandescent light bulbs. The light bulb with the spiral top is called a CFL or Compact Fluorescent Light bulb. The average life of a CFL is approximately 6-10 times that of an incandescent light bulb. Although CFLs are more expensive than compact fluorescent bulbs, they use less energy, providing a yearly savings of \$40-60 or more.

### **More efficient lighting ballasts**

Lighting ballasts are used to control current flow in fluorescent lighting. They are usually hidden from view, but are a factor in energy consumption. If you are having interior lighting replaced or installed, ask for energy efficient electronic ballasts.

### **Outlet insulators**

It may be hard to believe, but if your outlet covers are not properly insulated, air could be entering your home around them. Use outlet

insulators to help seal the space behind the outlet and lower your energy bills.

### **Ultra low flow toilets**

Low flow toilets use less than half the water of full flush toilets. Low flow toilets are now the standard for new construction, but many older homes still have full flush toilets installed. If you want to save even more money, consider a Dual flush toilet, which provides two different flushing options. When flushing toilets accounts for at least a third of your water bill, there is big potential to save with an upgrade.

### **Low flow showerheads**

Consumers worry that switching to a low flow showerhead will decrease their comfort in the shower. In reality, most people using a low flow shower head can't tell the difference between it and a regular showerhead.

### **Rain barrel water collection**

Where does all that water from your eaves, troughs, and downspouts go? In the street and down a gutter? Rain water is a wonderful resource to use for watering plants or gardening. Consider installing a rain barrel at the bottom of one of your downspouts to collect the water and tie it into an irrigation system. Next time there is a dry spell save some money on your water bill.

Don't do everything at once. Pick a few projects to tackle each year. By making just a few of these changes, you could be saving a great deal of money on utility payments. We can help you to prioritize. Pickett Plumbing is always ready to help with all of your plumbing needs.



## Win a \$200 Gift Card!

Complete and return for a chance to win a **\$200 gift card**. If you correctly answer the three questions below, we'll enter you in a drawing for a \$200 gift card. Second prize will be a \$100 gift card. All entries must be received by 1/31/2012. Mail to: Gift Card, c/o Pickett Plumbing, P.O. Box 690945, Houston, Texas 77269-0945

1. TRUE/FALSE \_\_\_\_ If moisture enters and reacts with the refrigerant, vital components like the compressor can be damaged.
1. \_\_\_\_ refers to airflow through gaps or cracks around windows, or in walls or flooring.
2. Ducts that run through your garage, attic, basement, or crawlspaces may be susceptible to \_\_\_\_ from the portion of the home where the \_\_\_\_ is regulated.

Please contact me about:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Conditioning/Filtration | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing maintenance  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing repairs              | <input type="checkbox"/> Water-saving fixtures |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Limit 1 entry per person. No purchase necessary. A purchase will not improve your chances of winning. Winner will be selected at random within 30 days of entry deadline. All decisions are final. All entrants agree to contest rules, which require winner to sign a prize and publicity release unless precluded by law. Must be 18 to enter. Failure to comply results in disqualification. Entries void if incomplete or illegible. No responsibility is assumed for lost, late, or illegible entries. Company employees and family members are ineligible. Odds depend on the number of entries received. Acceptance of the prize implies consent to use name and image in promotional material with the prize as compensation. All taxes are the responsibility of the winner.

## The Corner

Q: What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?  
A: Frostbite

Q: Why does Santa have 3 gardens?  
A: So he can ho-ho-ho!

Q: Where do polar bears vote?  
A: The North Poll.

Q: What do you get when you cross an archer with a gift wrapper?  
A: Ribbon Hood

Q: How do sheep in Mexico say Merry Christmas?  
A: Fleece Navidad!

Q: What do you call a bunch of grandmasters of chess bragging about their games in the hotel lobby?  
A: Chess nuts boating in an open foyer.

Q: What do snowmen eat for breakfast?  
A: Snowflakes.

Q: What's a good holiday tip?  
A: Never catch snowflakes with your tongue until all the birds have gone south for the winter.

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Pete (dog) and Pam (cat) are hoping you and your family have a grrrrreat Thanksgiving.

We are blessed, as they, to have you as a client and we appreciate the opportunity to serve you.

