

Ask the Answerman



Jerry Green

Q. I have a problem which I cannot figure out. I have five outlets that are not working anymore.

It seems like it would be a simple fix but they are spread out throughout the house. Two of them are in the garage, two of them are on the exterior of the house, one is on the front and one is on the back and one outlet is in the downstairs hall bathroom. I checked all my breakers and they are not tripped. I've searched and searched for open junction boxes broken wire and I've reset all my breakers and still cannot find the problem.

- Kevin H in Trenton

A. Dear Kevin, From your description I am going to guess that

you have a tripped GFCI, because all of the locations you mentioned are required to be GFCI protected.

You didn't say how old your house was but I'm going to guess it was built in the 1990's. Back in that time frame one GFCI could be used to protect all GFCI required locations in the same house. Typically it was in one of the bathrooms but that wasn't always true.

I think you need to check and reset all the GFCI's in the house. They could be in the basement, garage, another bathroom, by the panel, under a stairway or more than likely hidden behind something.

Q. I'm in the process of removing my carpeting and installing a new engineered wood flooring. Here's my problem. My table and chairs and a coffee table have metal feet on the bottom of the legs. I have been thinking that removing the metal feet might be best for the new flooring. The metal feet concentrate the weight on a smaller area than furniture legs without metal feet. And, I just see no

need for the metal feet. Does removing the feet sound like a good idea?

- Latisha in Mascoutah

A. Dear Latisha,

I think that's a little overboard. The usual thing most people do and I also did was to get adhesive felt pads and stick them onto your metal feet.

Q. I had a leak from the bottom of my sink strainer. I removed it, cleaned everything up, applied new plumber's putty etc. The lower nut is 3.5" I think. When I try to tighten it the strainer turns. I tried shoving a pair of needle nose pliers or screwdriver from above to stop it from turning. The sink is deep and the lock nut wrench really requires two hands to get going (at least for me). Short of another person to keep the top part from spinning, is there some trick to keep the strainer from turning while tightening the lock nut?

- Sean in Trenton

A. Dear Sean, I've always used a nee-

dle nose so that should work fine. Sounds like you are either trying to tighten it down too tight or you might not have the gasket on correctly.

Rubber ring goes on first, then the cardboard friction washer, then the nut. You might need a basket wrench if the needle nose pliers are not working for you.

A Basket Strainer Wrench is used to hold basket strainers in place during installation and normally cost about \$10.00. It's also possible you put too much putty on and you got it on the threads. That's very bad. So if you take it out and there is putty on the threads, get it all off and try again with a bit less putty.

After you push the basket down by hand, remove any excess that has squished out underneath before you put the rubber gasket, friction ring, and nut on.

Q. I want to build a small deck that will go between 2 brick walls. I want to attach it to the brick house wall and the brick garage wall opposite. I am assuming that I should attach a wooden board to the wall first and then the joist hangers to that but I was just thinking can I

just attach the joist hangers straight to the brick?

- Charles in Albers

A. Dear Charles,

Not really. The problem is there is no good way to attach joist hangers to masonry so you first need to bolt a rim joist to the brick then attach the joist hangers to the rim joist.

Q. I've had new widows installed and on the inside there is a 3/4 inch gap filled with caulking between the metal window and the wooden trim on the window sill. I'm painting the wooden trim should I also paint over the caulking? Would painting help repel moisture or does it make

any difference? Thanks

-Sherry in Aviston

A. Dear Sherry,

First off you need to make sure the caulk is paintable and not silicone caulk. Caulking almost always looks better long term with a coat of paint over it. Truthfully 3/4" is awfully wide for a bead of caulking, you may be able to get a better looking job if you can apply a thin piece of trim over it.

Jerry Green is the owner and principle inspector for Answerman Home Inspections LLC, a veteran owned company. If you have any questions or comments you can contact Jerry Green at answermanhi@charter.net

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Ways To Prepare Your Home For Bug Season

(StatePoint) Spring is the official start to bug season, making it important to prepare your home. Here are four steps you can take you keep bugs at bay:

1. Do a spot check: Check window and door screens for tears to prevent flying bugs from getting in the home and make repairs where necessary. Also, take a quick look around for areas with standing water and try to eliminate them. Standing water creates a breeding ground for mosquitos. Lastly, even the sturdiest garbage bags can't entirely prevent leaks and spills, and over time, your trash bins can begin to accumulate residue inside and around the rim. Bugs, especially flies, love leftovers, so give your garbage cans a thorough rinse.

2. Be ready: Put an effective pest control product in your shopping cart early in the season so you're ready when you see the first sign of bugs in your home. If you see one cockroach, chances are there are more hiding in nooks and crannies. It's hard to put a pin on how many, but an old saying is that for every one you do see, there are 10 more you don't. Striking at the first sign of ants or roaches can help you avoid big problems down the line, as these insects can multiply very quickly. One solid choice is Zevo Instant Action Bug Killer Spray. Zevo's BioSelective Technology targets and shuts down biological pathways found in bugs, not in people or pets. Easy to use, just spray on pests, then wipe up the dead bugs, as well as any excess product. Zevo is now available

nationwide at The Home Depot and Target, and online at zevoinsect.com.

3. Protect your trees: Prepare for the upcoming visit of the 17-year cicadas. In many parts of the country, billions of cicadas will swarm and the females will scrape small twigs to lay their eggs under bark. Protect small and vulnerable trees (ones that are under 4 or 5 feet tall) with cheesecloth to spare them

from attack.

4. Keep an eye on pets. Pets are liable to gobble up large helpings of dead cicadas. While not toxic, too many cicadas could cause some digestive issues for furry friends. Help keep them healthy by watching what they eat!

During the spring season, it is necessary to take steps both to keep bugs out, and to be ready if they do invade.



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