



Keep Your Home from Becoming a Critter Castle

Did you know that the type of insulation you use in your can impact whether or not your home is critter bait? With spring just around the corner, homeowners will no doubt be taking the opportunity to Spring clean and perhaps embark on some renovations. GreenSaver would like to remind homeowners that a properly insulated and sealed home is just as important to the health and comfort of your family during the warm months as it is during the winter time, for many reasons, including pest control.

If you're looking for an environmentally-friendly way to rid your home of pests, or to prevent them from showing up in the first place, properly sealing the home, especially the attic floor, is a good start. Critters looking for a comfy place to nest may find their way into your attic and walls, and the best way to prevent this from happening is to make sure there are no major access holes from the outside of a home. GreenSaver recommends having a skilled technician seal your roof flashing and soffits, the attic floor and exterior wall area properly. Not only will this prevent heat from escaping the home - which will save you money on your energy bills - but it should provide a front-line barrier to creatures like squirrels, mice and raccoons.

Insulating your walls and attic area with the proper materials may also prevent pests, even those as small as cockroaches and termites, from roosting in your house. GreenSaver recommends cellulose insulation, which is not only the most effective way to insulate your attic but it also acts a pest repellent. Cellulose, which is made up of 85% recycled paper fibre, is treated with borate, a naturally occurring, non-toxic substance that discourages critters but is safe for your family and pets. Boric powders like Borax have been used for decades to control critter infestation without the use of toxic pesticides and sprays. Animals and insects don't like this because it dries them out when they breathe it in. However, the powders are safe to people, plants and pets when not ingested, it's as benign (and uncomfortable) as table salt according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Perhaps the best news of all is that some of the cost of insulating and sealing your home could be covered by grants through Natural Resources' ecoENERGY Retrofits for Homes program. To qualify, you must have an ecoENERGY assessment of your home before you start the work. Make sure your energy advisor is certified through Natural Resources Canada. An assessment will generally cost between \$300-\$400 dollars, and the Province of Ontario will contribute up to \$150 towards the cost of an assessment. Under this program and the Ontario Home Energy Savings Program, there is up to \$10 000 available per house towards efficiency retrofits and upgrades, including those that will keep your home safe from critter invasion. So really, there's no excuse not to arm your home against unwanted visitors. You'll save money on energy bills, and keep your family safe and happy.

For further information or to schedule a GreenSaver Energy Assessment for an upcoming story, please contact:

Allison Wallis, Marketing Manager, GreenSaver

(416) 203-3106 ext 234 or [allison.wallis\(at\)greensaver.org](mailto:allison.wallis(at)greensaver.org)

GreenSaver is an independent non-profit corporation dedicated to environmental energy efficiency through ecoENERGY assessments, insulation solutions, new technologies like solar and province-wide energy program management. They have pioneered Ontario residential energy conservation for 25 years with economically viable and environmentally friendly measures to help individuals and organizations with their energy need (www.greensaver.org).