



**"If you have any family, friends, or loved ones this month looking to buy or sell a home, or upgrade their kitchen or baths, please give them our names!"**

**Deep thoughts,**

**Volume 2, Issue 4, April 2009**



**"Ask Nate!"**

Nate,  
I recently heard about tainted drywall imported from China that is being found in the US. Can you shed some light on this subject?

Thanks,  
Lynn

The drywall you are hearing about is in fact becoming a big problem. Chinese drywall imports started in significant amounts in 2005-2007 as a result of a shortage driven by the booming housing market and rebuilding after Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma.

The drywall contains dangerous levels of sulfur. Tests have shown that the drywall emits sulfur gases that corrode copper coils and electrical and plumbing components. It can also cause breathing problems. There does not seem to be any easy solution as the recommendation is to replace all contaminated drywall with new drywall.

The best indicator of whether you have Chinese drywall is the smell. It smells sort of like rotten eggs or when you first strike a match. Another way to find out if you have Chinese drywall experts say, is to look in your attic and check out the back of the drywall. If the drywall says "Made in China" or has a sticker on it that says Knauf Plasterboard Tianjin (KPT) or just KNAUF, it might be Chinese drywall. Also, check is your air conditioning unit. If it's black and corroded that's another sign of the defective drywall.

Nate



**\* If you know of someone who would appreciate our services, please call us.**



"And this is the downstairs half-bath."

**GREEN CORNER**

**HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN RAIN BARREL**

Why pay money to water your garden when you could simply harvest the free rain-water that runs down your gutters? Rain barrels are a great way to capture and store water, and while there are many (pricey) pre-made versions out there, it's really easy to make one yourself. This DIY eco project is super easy and can be as low as \$20!



**Click to play video!**

**DESIGN TIP**

**PAINT THOSE GARAGE DOORS**

Having a garage is great but having one that dominates the front of your home can be a design challenge. The biggest mistake homeowners make is drawing attention to standard or unattractive garage doors.



- DO paint the garage doors in the same color as the house itself and not the trim color or white (unless white is your house color). Painting the garage doors the same colors as the body of the house will make your home appear larger.
- DO paint the trim around the doors either to match the door or to match the trim on the rest of your home.
- DON'T paint the garage doors in the same accent color they chose for their front door or shutters. This draws too much attention to the doors and chops up the facade of the home.



**"A Springtime Treat!"**

**Recipe for....  
Balsamic Strawberries**



"Warm balsamic strawberries melt the ice cream giving a strawberry decadence without the calories. You could also serve these over yogurt."

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 cups fresh strawberries, hulled and halved
- 1/4 cup Splenda™
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 4 scoops low-fat vanilla ice cream (or yogurt)



**DIRECTIONS:**

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the strawberry halves, splenda, and balsamic vinegar. Cook until the strawberries are heated through and darkened to a ruby red. Place scoops of ice cream into dessert bowls or stemmed glasses. Spoon strawberries over the ice cream and serve.



**Current Mortgage Rates  
4/1/09**

<b>30 yr fixed</b>	<b>4.89%</b>
<b>15 yr fixed</b>	<b>4.65%</b>
<b>5/1 ARM</b>	<b>4.77%</b>



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Questions or comments? Email us at [nate@nathan-alan.com](mailto:nate@nathan-alan.com) or call 317-201-0049