

# VOLCANIC ASH INFORMATION 4

Prepared by Oregon State University's Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension Service. For more information, consult the OSU Extension Service in your county or the nearest branch Agricultural Experiment Station.

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## REMOVING VOLCANIC ASH FROM INSIDE THE HOME

The ash fallout from Mt. St. Helens has caused homemakers to wonder just how to handle it, report Oregon State University Extension Service home economists.

If your home is or should be in the path of ash from the mountain, Extension home economists have the following suggestions.

Cleaning ash out of your furnishings and other home interiors might begin outside, before it really has been tracked or carried in by friends and family members.

Entrances should be cleaned regularly, and you may wish to restrict entry to one that allows traffic to pass over a hard surface first rather than going directly from outside to carpeting. A large sponge rubber mat, slightly dampened and placed just inside the door followed by a textured mat will keep most of the ash in the entry way. Encourage people to shake shoes and brush clothes off before entering and to wear smooth, rather than heavily textured, shoe soles.

Damp mopping entry areas or hosing off sidewalks will also help keep ash out of your home.

Of course air-bourne ash will enter the house. Vacuum and dust the house regularly and perhaps more often than normal depending on the amount of residue. The ash contains tiny sharp particles, so you may wish to use the dusting attachment of the vacuum cleaner, rather than a dust cloth.

Check the machine often when using the vacuum. Bags should be emptied fre-

quently, perhaps when a third full. Because the ash is heavy in comparison to normal household soil, the "capacity" of the bag will be decreased. Check the vacuum's filter after every use.

Be alert to the heat of the motor. If it feels warm to your hand, stop the machine and allow it to cool. Overheating usually means the bag is at capacity, the filter needs cleaning, or the appliance is working too hard.

There may be times when the homemaker will want to use the vacuum in reverse, as an air blower to remove ash from cracks or crevices. Such action may be useful in a few situations, such as cleaning window sills, steps, or lawn furniture.

Ash residue on windows leaves a white ring on the glass that appears like water spots. Wash windows first with a garden hose before using a solution of warm water and detergent to clean the glass. Vacuum the sills and around panes. Rinse the window and rinse again, using lots of water, before polishing with newspaper or soft cloth.

To avoid scratching the glass, check carefully before polishing to see if ash has been removed. Windows should not be washed in hot sunlight. Detergent in the water may cause a film or spotting if applied to hot glass.

For ashy laundry, shake or vacuum clothes before putting in the washing machine. Wash using plenty of water. Wash small loads at a time using the amount of water and detergent recommended for a normal load.

Detergent is recommended because it aids removal of particles from clothing and suspends them in solution. Heavily soiled clothes may require a pre-rinse or an additional clear rinse after the wash cycle.

Check the tub after each load to remove any ash deposits before doing another. Tubs that are not perforated will tend to retain more ash. Also check filters and dryer tubs frequently for dust

buildup. The behavior of the ash in laundry may need to be handled similar to beach sand caught in clothing.

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