

## HELP! MY CHIMNEY STINKS!

The porous terra-cotta surfaces of flue tiles can absorb and hold odors, despite vigorous brushing. Even with the damper closed, sometimes there's a sooty smell; it can be especially noticeable when the weather is hot and humid, or when the barometric pressure drops prior to a storm.

It's likely that the air in the chimney is cooler than the ambient room temperature. The cooler air falls and brings odors down with it.

What to do:

1. Establish whether the chimney has an updraft (no smell) or a downdraft (smell) by lighting a match at the face of the fireplace. If the smoke goes into the fireplace, there is an updraft; if the smoke comes out of the fireplace, go to step #2.
2. Force the smell UP by turning the draft around. Depending on the severity of the downdraft, one of the following methods may work. Open the damper and:
  - Light a small paper or kindling fire to warm the chimney.
  - Put a space heater in the firebox and run it for a few minutes.
  - Place a small fan in the firebox, pointed upward, and run for a few minutes.
  - Set a lamp with a 100-watt bulb in the firebox.

Each method requires retesting (#1).

THE CHIMNEY SWEEP

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