

# Winter Storage Guide

*By Terry Judd*

Car collectors call it Michigan cancer. You know it as simple rust, aggravated by winter driving and the state's liberal use of corrosive road salt.

Naturally, driving rust-prone Studebakers in the winter is unthinkable so most members put their pride and joys away for the winter. But while a stored car is protected from direct winter damage, it also faces a multitude of hazards, including moisture, extremes in temperature and rodents.

As part of a Muskegon Chronicle article on winter storage, I contacted Jeff Backer Jr., president of B.W. Inc. of Minnesota, who says moisture and mice are the biggest dangers facing a stored car and protective steps should be taken .

B.W. Inc manufactures a variety of products designed to preserve vehicles, including moisture absorbing pillows, and has produced a video tape on how to preserve collector cars.

"Moisture is the biggest problem and steps should be taken to protect the interior, exterior, trunk and engine compartment," he says. "The second major problem is rodents. Mice and rats can do all sorts of damage to wiring and interiors."

But with proper precautions these dangers can be reduced. According to Backer, the first step to wintertime storage is finding an appropriate storage area. The best place is an enclosed dry area, like a shed, garage or pole barn.

Heated areas, he says, tend to attract more moisture than unheated buildings. And storage areas should be free from direct sunlight.

To prepare a car for storage, Backer recommends first washing the entire vehicle. Chips in car finish should be covered with touch Dup paint and the entire vehicle waxed. He also advises the interior be thoroughly cleaned and vinyl areas treated with a liquid protector.

He says the glove box, ash trays and carpet should be cleaned of moisture<sup>2</sup>Dattracting dirt. The car also should be sealed by making sure all windows and vents are closed.

Owners also should check tire pressure, make sure all mechanical repairs are made prior to storage and check all fluid levels. Oil and oil filters also should be changed. Don't forget the radiator, which should be filled with the correct mixture of antifreeze and water.

When a vehicle is stored, Backer says the battery should be disconnected. Also, he says a vehicle should not be stored with fuel containing alcohol. Alcohol, he says, attracts more moisture than regular gasoline and can damage a fuel system.

To protect tires from dry rot promoted by moist dirt or damp cement, Backer recommends placing a piece of wood under each tire. Also, never store a vehicle with the parking brakes on. Dirt and moisture can cause parking brakes to stick and seize, he says.

For the engine, steps need to be taken if the vehicle is to be stored for an extended period. He recommends that spark plugs be removed and oil squirted into each combustion chamber. Spark plugs then should be reinstalled. If that car is accessible, an alternative is to start the car once a month to lubricate the engine's internal parts.

If a car cover is to be used, Backer recommends a cloth cover capable of breathing.

Even when proper precautions are taken, moisture and pests are a potential danger. While moth balls will discourage mice and rats from using a car as a winter home, the odor will linger. Backer's company manufactures an electronic device called Pest Away, that emits a 160 degree ultrasonic sound that shields a vehicle from nasty pests.

B.W. Inc. also manufactures Drypac, moisture absorbing pillows that stop moisture and mildew damage.

Information, prices and ordering information on Drypac and Pest Away are available at 1 800 950 2210. B.W. Inc. also is developing a heavy grade bag that will totally enclose a vehicle. Similar products are available from other companies .

Bob May reports he has had good results using moisture absorbing pillows and the Omni Bag to seal his vehicles. With the Omni Bag system, a car is driven into the large bag, the air is sucked out, then the bag is sealed. Bob reports good result with long term stored automobiles.