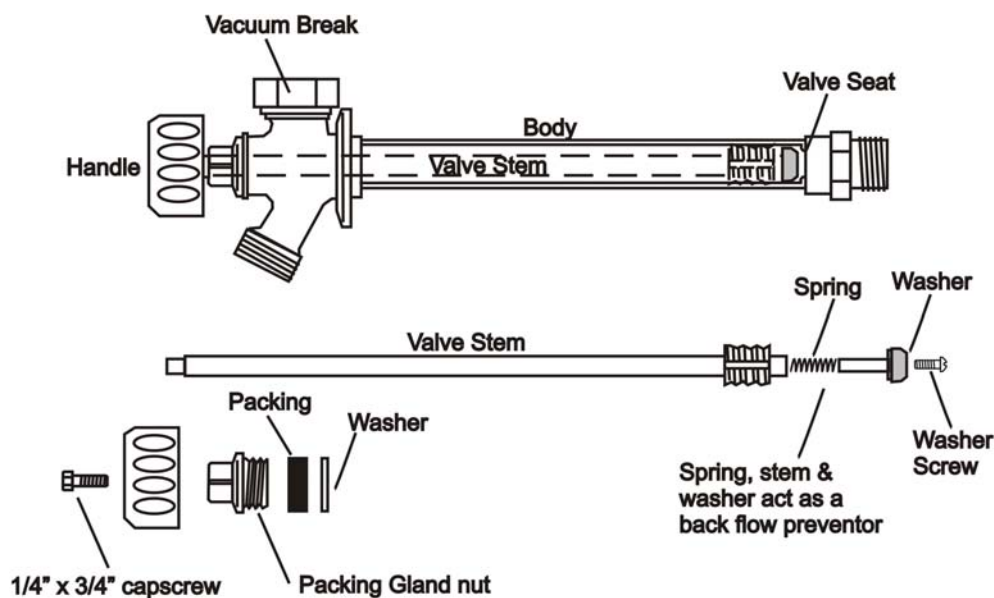


## Hose Faucets/Sillcocks

I have had some neighbors ask about the hose bibs outside our home. They, like everything else around here, are getting older and may need a washer change. That is, if the washer is leaking. If you shut the valve all the way off, disconnect the hose and there is still water coming out, the washer should be changed. If there is water coming out around the valve with the hose connected but not opened, then that is probably just from the packing around the valve stem leaking and usually stops if you open the valve all the way. Unfortunately, there are a couple of things that make this job tougher than it should be. First, the 1/4" screw that holds the valve handle on is only cadmium plated and the threads get rusted and sometimes the head of the cap screw also. This screw has a 3/8" hex head and a slot for a blade screw driver. DO NOT try the bladed screw



driver, you will

only mess it up

unless you had it

off before and

coated the threads

with something.

Get a 3/8" six sided

socket, have

someone hold back

on the valve handle with a strap wrench or wrap a rag on the handle and use a pipe wrench while you turn the socket wrench. If you use a 12 sided socket you will probably strip it. If the 3/8" socket feels loose on the screw head, get a six sided 9mm socket from someone and tap it on with a hammer. It is just a bit smaller and should make it snug enough that it will not slip. The screw

threads are rusted so it will be a tough go, but the four or five I have done so far all came out. If you snap the head off, no big deal you can still put the handle on and off. And you need it off to change the washer. Once the handle is off, the white plastic packing gland hex head becomes accessible. Turn off the ball valve inside the house for that outside faucet. They are usually located under the bathroom vanity or kitchen sink. Now, the trick with the plastic packing gland nut is that the thread is left handed and you must turn it clockwise to loosen it. Use the correct size wrench or tight fitting adjustable wrench, not the pliers your grandfather gave you or a vise grip as you will strip the plastic. When you get the packing gland nut off, pull on the valve stem and the packing, washer and stem will come out and you will see the washer on the end. Notice the end with the washer on it is spring loaded. This is a back flow preventer. It stops water from outside entering your house piping if there is any reverse pressure. You can use a flat washer or tapered washer, just make sure the diameter is the same. After changing the washer, reassemble everything in reverse, snug up the packing gland nut

fairly tight and get a stainless steel 1/4" x 3/4" replacement cap screw to hold the handle on. This size cap screw usually has a 7/16" head on it which is a little bigger and easier to work with. If the valve terminates in a wall it will be only about 5" long, if it terminates in a kitchen or bathroom cabinet it will be longer, more like 12" and



the whole valve can be replaced by unscrewing it from the piping under the cabinet. Do not forget to remove the hose from the valve in the winter or water may remain trapped and freeze.

Bob Mattsson