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Air conditioners don't work dirty

During the winter months the manufacturers of dehumidifiers and room air conditioners will produce as many as possible only to have a nation's supply dwindle away during a hot summer. You and I have seen many summers here in the Detroit area where you couldn't buy a room air conditioner simply because the retailers were sold out.

During the next few months, consumers will bring into service shops the room air conditioner and dehumidifier to have serviced and repaired. The standard complaints will be it didn't cool well last year, it gets all frosted up on the inside coil, it blows fuses, the fan doesn't run, etc. For every 200 of these products brought in for service, I would guesstimate that only 10 of them had a component failure and the rest suffered a malady called dirt.

You may not see the dirt that has built up inside these products and therefore never realize the severity of this kind of condition. The repairs needed to a dirty product are quite

simple for any homeowner to perform.

Take these units to a local bay style car wash and pour the hose to every area of the product. A good cleaning can keep a room air conditioner and/or dehumidifier operating in peak condition for many years to come.

If you would like to go one step further with these products let me suggest something you can do. The fan motors on these products may have little oil ports, where you can insert 10 to 20 drops of turbine oil. It means removing all of the screws that hold the outer casing or wrapping of the product. I can't tell you how many times I have saved the consumer an expensive motor replacement by simply oiling the fan motor.

What irks me so is the fact that many of these motors have a sticker on them that states: Oil the fan motor once a year. The manufacturers know this and yet they have never created

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permits set the unpotted bulb in the garden in a place where it will benefit from some shade from midday sun. Cover the bulb with six to eight inches of sandy humus soil where it may again flower that same season or another year.

Timely Garden Tips

• This is the ideal time to apply crabgrass preventer to the lawns, when forsythia starts to bloom and before apple blossoms show pink.

• Increase rhododendron flowering by pinching back the tips of new growth.

• If your garden is battered by

strong winds, install a windbreak such as a row of shrubs, a hedge, a wall or a fence (of open, rather than solid, construction).

• Lavender is reported to repel mosquitoes and birds! If you're bothered by birds attacking plants such as pans or crocuses, plant lavender with them.

• Remember to remove the nursery tag from the tree or shrub when you plant it.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859. Her fax number is (810) 644-1314.

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