

Make the summer heat a breeze

Don't get left out in the heat during the dog days of summer. There are dozens of ways to keep rising temperatures at bay now, without creating a strain on your checkbook.

Options include either cooling a particular area or the whole house. For homes that already have air conditioning, fans can make cooling systems more efficient and less costly to run.

"This is the time of year when customers want to know the most economical way to cool off their home and keep their electric bills down at the same time," said Home Depot Store Manager Randall Calvin. "There are a number of products that the do-it-yourselfer can install that will make a noticeable difference in both house temperature and air conditioning costs."

Following are ways to help you beat the heat this summer.

Ceiling fans

Good for individual rooms and small homes, ceiling fans efficiently circulate air by keeping a constant stream of cold air blowing toward the floor. They are simple to install and are useful during both the summer and winter months.

Most models have switches to reverse the direction of the fan blades so air can be blown up or

down. As a general rule, the blades should turn clockwise during the summer and counterclockwise during the winter. The counterclockwise turn pitches the blades up so the fan will suck the colder air toward the ceiling.

Ceiling fans may be used alone or can be added to enhance a home's existing cooling system. When used with an air conditioner, the breeze circulates the cold air more evenly about a house, making the air conditioner more efficient. Moving air is also easier to cool, making the existing cooling system less costly to use.

"Ceiling fans blend in with the decor in any room," Calvin said, adding that they are known to increase a home's marketability.

Circulating fans

Also known as high-velocity fans, circulating fans work well in smaller homes. These fans come in different sizes and have stands so they can be placed anywhere and pitched at any angle for a variety of functions. Versatility makes circulating fans a popular option.

The fan can be placed in front of a basement door, for example, to remove hot air. Or, if located strategically in a hallway, it can move air throughout an entire house.

Since the fan can be pitched at different angles on its stand, it can be used as a whole house fan. It can be placed in a window, facing out, to blow hot air out of a house. On cool nights, if all other house windows are cracked, it can cool the entire house, creating a comfortable breeze in any room.

Another bonus is that a high-velocity fan keeps the air conditioner from working overtime on very hot days.

Whole-house fans

Whole-house fans are installed in the ceiling with the motor concealed in the attic. A permanent fixture, these fans generally are not used with air conditioners since they pull cool air into a house through windows and push hot air out through attic gables.

These fans will effectively cool an entire home, large or small, creating a nice draft throughout the house when the windows are opened slightly.

Attic fans

These fans suck hot air out of the attic, which often has a cushion of hot air built up, insulating the house. The fans eliminate that cushion, allowing a house to be insulated instead by a layer of cooler air, which helps air condi-

tioners keep the house cool.

Dozens of attic fans are available to suit any home, including fans with electric and manual thermostats, and fans for mounting on attic gables or on the roof. Roof ventilators generally perform the same function as attic fans. A thermostatically controlled, electrically powered roof ventilator can make a big difference in the temperature of a home as well as in air conditioning costs.

Air conditioners

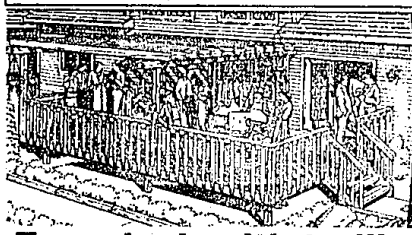
A broad range of window-mounted air conditioners can be bought for small and large homes.

The smallest unit, 5,000 Btu, is generally used to cool individual rooms and can adequately cool up to 150 square feet, an average-size bedroom. The largest unit, 24,000 Btu, can cool homes of up to 1,500 square feet.

The most important factor in deciding what size air conditioner to buy depends on how many square feet it has to cool.

Calvin also suggests air conditioners be paired with ceiling or circulating fans, since they will make any window unit cool a house more efficiently.

The Weekly Do-It-Yourselfer



Easy deck with trellis

Adding a deck can enhance your existing home in many ways. Increasing the value along with improving the appearance are just a couple of reasons why homeowners are looking for ways to add to their comfort at home. The package includes four sizes to choose from, ranging from 14'x16' to 16'x20'. Also included are stair and railing instructions along with optional trellis plans to make your deck a unique addition to your home. Two complete sets of the plans are included: one for you or

your builder and one for the building department. Plans include clearly labeled, detailed drawings along with full framing instructions. Illustrations are drawn three dimensionally with full elevations and cross sectional diagrams. Step-by-step comprehensive instructions are included to aid you in construction. A full materials list will make your trip to a local lumberyard for building materials another easy step toward the completion of your new project.

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Seal your deck to keep it looking great

This is the time of year when you want to invite friends over, fire up the grill and spend the day lounging on the deck. But if you want to keep it looking good and safe to walk on, it's important to treat your deck annually with a sealer-preservative.

Year-around alternating rain and baking sun can wreak havoc on decks, drying out the wood and making it susceptible to water retention and rot. In damp climates, it can develop a mossy patina, which can be removed by scrubbing the deck surface with a mild bleach solution.

A weathered deck can be restored to its original wood color with a deck-brightening solution, which is available at home improvement stores. Before applying a preservative, take time to replace nails and smooth splintered boards, cautions Bob Leiberg of The Home Depot.

Foot traffic and the weathering process can cause nails to

Tools
Screw gun
sprayer
scrub brush
finishing sander paintbrush
Materials
Deck brightener deck sealer
deck screws

smooth out any rough areas before applying finish to decking boards, railing or stairs.

After you sand the rough areas, vacuum the deck to get rid of any loose sawdust. Apply a staining sealer to all wood, preferably using a pressure sprayer, followed by a paintbrush to smooth out drips and runs. Porous wood may require another coat of staining sealer for even coverage.

Leiberg recommends stain in preference to paint or varnish because it does not form a hard skin that can crack and peel. If your deck already is painted or has a coat of varnish and you are switching to stain, you must first remove all loose and peeling paint with a scraper and, if necessary, a paint remover. After all the paint has been removed, scrub the deck with a stiff brush to remove all

traces of remover. Once the deck has dried apply a heavy coat of stain and sealer. Avoid staining in direct sunlight or if rain is forecast for the next day.

To renew your deck

1. Mix deck-brightening solution as directed by manufacturer. Apply solution with pressure sprayer and let set for 10 minutes.

2. Scrub deck thoroughly with a stiff scrub brush. Wear rubber gloves and eye protection.

3. Rinse deck with clear water. If necessary, apply a second coat of brightener to extremely dirty or stained areas. Rinse and let dry. Apply a fresh coat of sealer of stain.

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