

Keeping Your Home Cool in Summer Without Breaking the Bank

Canada may be thought of as a cold country, but Canadians know that the summer months most certainly can pack some heat. During these hot times, many of us struggle to keep the inside of our homes cool. A recent Natural Resources Canada survey discovered that 52 percent of Canadian homes now have air conditioners, up by 33 percent over the past ten years.

With rising energy costs, an additional appliance can make a big difference in our summer bills. There are a few simple things you can do to help ensure your home stays cool while keeping money in your wallet this summer. The first thing to consider is your insulation. If your house has been wet from a flood or any type of leak damage, there is a good chance your insulation will need to be replaced to keep cool in and heat out. Also, check your home for drafts. Not only are winter drafts a drain on the electric bill, trying to cool a home with exterior air circulating in will also add more to your electricity bill. If you find any holes, it's a simple solution to plug them with insulation. This can easily save 20 to 60 percent of your energy year-round.

Another way to ensure a cool interior is to keep the windows closed. It's also important to close the drapes and blinds. This will easily deflect the sun's heat and keep those rays outside. Having your windows tinted will also add up to a large amount of sun deflection.

Using a fan during the day is much cheaper than using the air conditioner all the time. It may be best to save that cool air for bedtime if your house is still warm inside. Before you plug in your air conditioner unit for the summer, take a few minutes to give it a clean. Check the coolant coils. If they're covered in dirt and grime, this will cause your unit to work harder, increasing your electric bill. Cleaning this grime can easily save up to 5 percent on your summer cooling costs. Replacing the air conditioner filter will also make a difference in performance and efficiency.

Planting a tree is not only a beautiful way to enhance your home it's also a natural way to keep it cool. Planting a tree or two on the south side of your house will add much needed shade for the summer months. If you chose a deciduous tree, they will naturally shed their leaves in the fall, allowing for more light through your house in the winter, not to mention trees add a positive impact to the environment by improving air quality and the value of your landscaping.

Increasing your air conditioner by a degree or two warmer will also shed a few dollars from the energy cost each month. Any of these ideas can keep your bills down and money in your pocket.

BHM Financial (June 30, 2010)