

# A SHADY SOLUTION

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The summer heat is just around the corner. Here are a few things you can be thinking about to help with your cooling energy bills this summer.

If you have lived in the desert long you know about the harsh desert sun. In a typical home, on a hot day, more heat comes thru one square foot of glass than an entire insulated wall. Solar radiation (infrared light) through glass is responsible for approximately 20% of the load on an air conditioner. Typically, 46% of your utility bill goes for cooling. There are many ways to reduce your cooling bill, but the overall theme is shade. Any shade you can create on your home no matter how big or small makes your house easier to cool. Here are a few ways to reduce that energy bill and make your house a more comfortable place to live.

Landscaping is a natural and beautiful way to keep your home cool in summer and reduce your energy bills. A well-placed tree, shrub, or vine can deliver effective shade, and reduce your energy bills. Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of the energy a typical household uses for energy. Research shows that summer daytime air temperatures can be 3° to 6° cooler in tree-shaded



neighborhoods than in treeless areas. A lattice or trellis with climbing vines, or a planter box with trailing vines, shades the home's perimeter while admitting cooling breezes to the shaded area.

If you can't wait for trees and vines to grow and shade your home you may want to try a more immediate solution. Valances, awnings, and sunscreens conserve

energy by shading your windows and doors thereby keeping the sun's heat and damaging UV and IR radiation out of your home. These products reduce the amount of energy required to cool your home environment while protecting your valuable furnishings, floor coverings, and window treatments from being damaged by the sun. Studies by the American Society of Heating and Air Conditioning Engineers show that during the period of the day when the sun shines directly on south facing windows a fabric awning reduces heat gain by 55-65%. For western exposure, the reduction in heat gain is 72-77%. Shade products also serve to make your decks and patios much more comfortable and enjoyable. Sunscreens and Drop Curtains can provide shade for these areas reducing the temperature in outdoor living spaces by 20° or more.



*As this illustration shows, while window tinting and indoor blinds or curtains can be effective, the best results are achieved by blocking the sun before it gets to the glass. Additional awning information can be found at: [www.awninginfo.org](http://www.awninginfo.org)*

A recent study, "Awnings in Residential Buildings: The Impact on Energy Use and Peak Demand," conducted by the Center for Sustainable Building Research at the University of Minnesota, has found that awnings over windows in Phoenix area homes can reduce energy costs by up to 21%. This means you spend less on energy, and reduce your carbon footprint. To see a copy of this study, go to: <http://www.awninginfo.org/images/stories/documents/pdf/energystudy22007.pdf>

The ticket is to keep the sun off of the house. Whether you choose trees and vines or awnings and screens, or some combination of both, find a way to keep the sun's heat from heating up your home so you don't have to spend so much money to cool it back down! For more info on fabric shade solutions and how they look visit [www.squaredawnings.com/products](http://www.squaredawnings.com/products)