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Stay Cool During August Heat

UNLESS YOU KEEP your thermostat so low that you send your cooling bill through the roof in August, it's a good idea to find some energy-friendly ways to keep your cool during the hottest month of the year.

Here are five tips:

Take cool showers. If your house isn't cold—and there's no reason it should be, even with the air conditioner on—ease up on the hot showers. A cool shower will lower your body temperature and get you just as clean.

Chill the meal plan. Instead of baking, broiling, boiling, sautéing or frying every night, opt for chopping fresh veggies, making colorful salads and satisfying your family's hunger with healthy raw foods that will fill them up and give your stove and oven a break. Cold desserts? That's the easy part. You can't go wrong with sorbet or ice cream straight from the freezer.

Filter the sun. Install solar screens or window films on east- and west-facing windows so you can keep the heat out while still allowing light in.

Seal leaks and cracks. You'll find them all over your home—around windows, doors, and electrical and cable outlets. It's easy to caulk and weatherstrip, and it's an activity you can do with your kids as you teach them to use energy responsibly.

Schedule a checkup. Even if you skipped your air conditioner's spring maintenance, go ahead and schedule it now. Your HVAC tech can tell you if your air conditioning unit is running efficiently—and can tweak it so it does. It's important to raise the thermostat a bit during the summer—but also to make sure the cool air that does come into the home gets there efficiently.

Bonus tip: Set your thermostat 1 degree warmer to save 3%–5% on your air conditioning costs. ■

Picnic Grape Salad With Lemon Twist

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- 1/3 cup sugar**
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar**
- 2 teaspoons almond extract (or vanilla extract)**
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (or more to taste)**
- 2 pounds green grapes, washed and dried**
- 2 pounds red seedless grapes, washed and dried**
- 3 tablespoons walnuts or pecans**

1. Beat together the cream cheese, sour cream, sugars and almond (or vanilla) extract until blended.
2. Pour fresh lemon juice into the mixture. Add the grapes and nuts; toss to coat.
3. Transfer to a serving bowl, cover and refrigerate until serving time.

SERVES 6-8

TCP Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.

BRENT HOFACKER | ISTOCK.COM



Check on Your Neighbors

NOT EVERYONE CAN afford central air conditioning for their homes, and not everyone can tolerate the summer heat well enough to leave their air-conditioned homes for necessities like groceries.

Extreme heat kills more Americans each year than hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes and floods combined, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. So keep an eye out this summer for neighbors who might be living without air conditioning or who are elderly or have medical conditions.

Medical experts say the following symptoms could mean your neighbor is suffering from heat-related illness: confusion, fatigue or weakness, and mail piling up outdoors when they're at home.

Anyone can suffer from heatstroke if they get too hot or from dehydration if they don't drink enough water, but elderly and sick neighbors are at higher risk.

If you can:

- ▶ Call or visit an at-risk neighbor twice a day.
- ▶ Invite the neighbor to stay with you in your air-conditioned home on the hottest days and even overnight if you have room.
- ▶ Remind your neighbor to drink plenty of water. Bring pitchers of cold water, lemonade and caffeine-free iced tea as gifts.
- ▶ Offer to go grocery shopping for your neighbor or to drive them to the store so there's no need to wait outside for transportation.
- ▶ Find indoor events and community- or church-sponsored activities that neighbors could participate in as a way to stay cool during the day.
- ▶ Give and set up a portable fan that can help alleviate warm temperatures indoors.
- ▶ Find out if your at-risk neighbor has pets. If so, tend to the animals as well by filling water bowls frequently and making sure plenty of pet food is on hand.

Research shows that just about 17% of us check on neighbors during the summer. Make your family one that increases that statistic. ■

NCEC Operation Round Up

Second Quarter 2022 Grants Approved

Organization/Agency	Grant
Barry Volunteer Fire Department	\$ 3,000
Dawson Volunteer Fire Department	3,000
Ennis FFA Booster Club	3,000
Essential Foundation	1,500
Frost Community Center	3,000
Navarro County 4-H	3,000
Navarro County Crime Stoppers	1,250
T and S Ministries	1,000
United Way of Navarro County	3,000
Warehouse Living Arts Center	3,000
Waxahachie Senior Citizens Center	1,000
Total	\$25,750



Navarro County Electric Cooperative

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Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

LOCAL

(903) 874-7411

TOLL-FREE

1-800-771-9095

ABOUT NAVARRO COUNTY EC

NCEC owns and maintains more than 3,000 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 12,000 members in Ellis, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and Navarro counties.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

BILL PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Online at navarroec.com
- Through the SmartHub app
- By phone at 1-855-385-9975
(Phone payments are not accepted on the NCEC office line.)

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

NCEC provides *Texas Co-op Power* and TexasCoopPower.com to give you information about events, safety, special programs and other activities of your cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the co-op office.

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Seal Drafts To Make Your Home More Comfortable

DRAFTS ARE A COMMON PROBLEM, particularly in older homes, where about half of the conditioned air leaks to the outside every hour. The good news is that you can seal air leaks on your own with a little time and effort.

Here are three steps to get you started.

1. Find the leaks.

The first step is a thorough visual search of the interior and exterior of your home. Look for gaps and holes in exterior walls, floors and ceilings. These are often found where different building materials meet, such as at the top of cement foundation walls and around windows and doors. Another common source of air leaks is where pipes or wiring penetrate a wall, floor or ceiling. Ductwork located in unheated crawl spaces and attics can also leak.

Exterior doors and windows deserve your attention. Open each door or window and place a dollar bill between the door or window sash and the frame. If you can pull the bill out easily when the door or window is closed again, the seal is not tight enough. Also, a window that rattles when it's closed or when it's windy probably isn't sealed sufficiently.

The best way to find air leaks is to hire an energy auditor to do a blower door test. A blower door is a large fan that's mounted

in a doorway to depressurize the house, allowing the auditor to find leaks and make recommendations for sealing them.

2. Gather the materials you'll need:

Caulk. You'll need a caulk gun and caulk for indoor/outdoor use that is water-soluble until it cures and is paintable when dry.

Expanding spray foam. This is an effective way to plug leaks, but it can be messy.

Weatherstripping. Prices vary depending on type and length of the materials, but there's a wide variety of weatherstripping options made of vinyl, metal and felt, or open-cell foam that works for most situations.

Pre-cut foam socket sealers. These go behind electrical outlets on exterior walls.

Chimney plug balloon. You may need a chimney plug balloon if your chimney flue doesn't seal well. Buy a square or round one to match the shape of your flue.

Adhesive plastic window insulation sheets. You may need insulation sheets later in the year for windows that can't be sealed and don't have storm windows.

3. Do it! ■

Keep Your Patio Cool on Hot Summer Days

NOTHING BRINGS FAMILY, neighbors and friends together better in the summer than a cookout on a fully equipped patio. But on the hottest days, it's tempting to move the party indoors.

Instead, consider cooling your patio down a bit. **Here are some suggestions:**

Add a roof. The best way to keep the heat from ruining an afternoon party is to keep the sun off of the patio. Consider building a metal roof over your patio or installing a retractable awning or a pergola. A pergola adds shade and makes an outdoor area extra stylish. If large shade structures are too expensive or big, try patio umbrellas.

Another idea for shade: Use retractable screens that can be drawn down to block the sun from the sides.

Install some fans. If your patio is covered, a ceiling fan can create a soft breeze that will cool off everyone who is sitting or standing nearby. Portable, high-velocity fans placed on the patio floor also will help guests feel cooler. Plus, they'll keep bugs at bay.

Try a mister. This is an outdoor cooling system that sprays a fine mist that evaporates before hitting the ground or getting the patio—or the people using it—wet. The heat in the air makes the mist evaporate, leaving less heat in the immediate area. A tip: Get a good system, as the ones you connect to your garden hose could feel more like playing in the sprinklers.

Paint the floor. When sunshine lands on the concrete floor of an uncovered patio, it can overheat both the area and your guests' feet. Consider painting the floor a light color to keep it from absorbing so much heat. Or simply throw a sturdy outdoor rug on the floor.

Add potted plants. Plants can absorb heat, release moisture into the air and add shade. ■



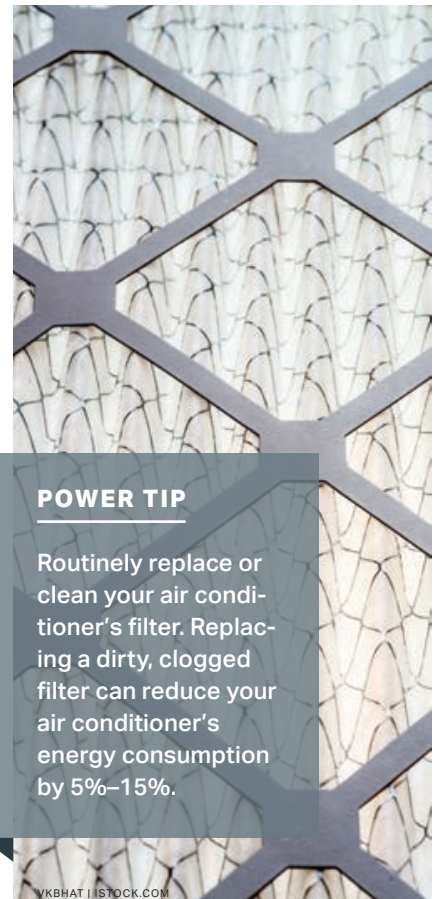
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DID YOU KNOW?

Fans cool people, not rooms. In the summer, turn fans off when leaving a room to save electricity.

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POWER TIP

Routinely replace or clean your air conditioner's filter. Replacing a dirty, clogged filter can reduce your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5%–15%.

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