

Keeping Cool while going Green

Sustainability Spotlight Article Excerpt From Connections For Sustainability Newsletter Issue 6: June 2012

By Jaclin DuRant - Livability Educator and Gillian Small - guest contributor from Furman University

Sometimes, it can be difficult to worry about conserving energy when the temperature outside is rising. Well, it's easy to keep your home cool, be sustainable, and save money all at once. First of all, set your thermostat to 78°F to help lower your cooling bill and have less of an impact on the environment. While that may seem a little high for the summer temperatures, the following easy tips will help you keep cool and save some money:

- Make sure you are closing the blinds or curtains during the day (especially on the Southern side of your home) to keep the sunlight from shining directly into your house.
- Try installing ceiling fans in the main living areas of your home. Ceiling fans are a great energy efficient way to cool your home in the hot summer months.
- Don't do laundry or dishes in the heat of the day to avoid adding extra heat to your home. Instead, save these tasks for the evening or night. If you have the space, try hanging your clothes outside on a line to dry in order to reduce energy use and the heat added to your home by the clothes dryer.

- Instead of using your oven for day time cooking, try using a microwave or stove top. An oven is energy intensive and adds extra heat to your house. Even better, throw some food on the grill and keep all of that extra heat outside.

- Turn on the exhaust fan in the bathroom when taking a hot shower or turn the water temperature down and take a quick cool shower. This will decrease the heat in the room and generally make the whole house cooler.

- Finally, the landscape around your home can help save you energy. Planting large shade trees on the southern side of your home helps keep your home cooler, and many native plants, once established, use less water than non-natives.

The summer heat is always a challenge in the South, but hopefully these easy energy saving tips will help you stay cool and sustainable this summer.

