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Finding the Truth About Energy Savings Beat the Heat! Ways to Save Around Your Home Landscaping for Energy Efficiency

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Finding the Truth About Energy Savings

Theresa Drake, Senior Manager of Customer Relations and Energy Efficiency

Recently, we've been asked if Idaho Power partners with contractors selling either insulation or heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) services door-to-door. The answer is "no." Contractors working on behalf of Idaho Power will not approach you without an invitation and an appointment, and they will not try to sell you products or services without an express invitation to do so.

We know it can be hard to tell between fact and fiction with so many energy-saving messages and gadgets in the marketplace. To make good decisions about saving energy in your home, you need trusted sources.

You can rely on websites such as energystar.gov or energysavers.gov

for sound advice based on research. Many universities also do research and publish reliable information.

But what works in one climate or situation can be counterproductive in another. Given the amount of information to sort through, may I suggest you turn to Idaho Power?



You can ask Idaho Power a question by clicking on "Contact Us" in the banner bar at idahopower.com. Idaho Power has over 200 engineers and scientists devoted to understanding and meeting your energy needs. We also work with other utilities in the Northwest to fund research aimed at understanding our climate and the most costeffective ways to save energy here at home. And when a question stumps us, we have access to a network of researchers to find the answer.

The next time you have a question about an energy-saving product or idea, I invite you to reach out to us. We will provide you with reliable information to help you make the best decision possible.

Thank you, in advance, for using us as your trusted energy advisor.

Shuresa Drake

Vacation Energy Savings

Taking off? Give your home a vacation, too.

The last thing you want to worry about while you're away is your electricity bill. Here are some basic steps to take before you leave town for an extended period.

- Turn your water heater down to the lowest temperature setting.
- Turn off your air conditioner or consider setting it to a higher-than-normal temperature. Remember, if you set it to 85° F and the temperature outside gets to 95° F, your air conditioner will still provide 10 degrees of cooling for the empty house. And with a smart thermostat, you can have your home cool and comfortable just in time for your return.
- Close drapes and blinds especially on the east and west sides of your home
- Consolidate refrigerators and freezers. Unplug the empties, and leave doors propped to keep the insides odor-free.
- Turn off lights, and either use energy-efficient LEDs along with security timers and motion sensors or smart bulbs (controlled from a cell phone) to create a lived-in look.
- Switch off computers and power strips, and unplug small appliances and electronics. This will cut energy use 24/7.

Remember to set realistic savings expectations.

- Extra laundry and chores can increase energy use before you leave and when you return.
- Expected savings may be distributed between two bills.

The best way to see the impact your vacation had on your energy use is by viewing the daily and hourly use for specific days in My Account on our website.

idahopower.com

Beatthe Heat!

Hot summer days and comfort don't have to be mutually exclusive. Thanks to modern air conditioning, they go together like lemonade and ice cubes. To stay cool and beat the heat while using energy efficiently, keep these principles in mind:

Work with your body

Drink water. To keep a steady supply of cold water, while keeping the fridge closed, freeze a plastic bottle half-full. Take it out and add more water, refilling it as long as the ice holds out.



Dress for the heat. Wear light colors to reflect light and heat, and choose natural fabrics (cotton, silk, linen) or fabrics engineered for breathability. Lightweight, loose-fitting summer styles, i.e., sandals, shorts, skirts and sleeveless or short-sleeved tops will be most comfortable.

Turn on fans. Air movement across the skin causes evaporation and makes you feel an average of 4 degrees cooler than the air temperature. When you do use the air conditioner, leave fans running in occupied rooms. Air circulation makes a room feel cooler and lets you save energy by setting the thermostat higher, without sacrificing comfort. Remember that fans cool people and not air, so turn them off when you leave a room.





Maintain and use equipment wisely

Check your air conditioner coils and furnace filter. Neither work well if they're dusty, dirty or clogged. Vacuum coils to remove leaves. Hold the filter up to bright light; if you can't see light through it, it's time to clean or replace it. Most of us change filters far too infrequently.

Experiment with an energy-efficient summer temperature of 78 degrees.

You can save about 3 percent on cooling costs for each degree you raise your thermostat. So, if you increase it even one to two degrees above where it is now, savings will begin to accumulate.

Consider using a programmable or smart thermostat. Programmable thermostats can help manage your comfort by turning up the temperature when you leave and turning it back

down before you return home. Some smart thermostats don't even require programming they sense when the



home is empty, learn your patterns and adjust automatically to create effortless year-round savings.

Keep the heat out and the cool in

Insulate your house. Insulation is just as important to keep the heat out in the summer as it is to keep the heat in during the winter.

Use vents and exhaust fans to pull heat and moisture from the kitchen, bathroom and laundry. But don't leave them on once the moisture is gone or you may send cooled air out those vents!

Keep windows open on cool nights.

Take advantage of cool night air. Make sure screens are intact, and always put safety first when leaving windows open. Close the windows and blinds before it gets warm the next day.

Regardless of how you choose to stay cool and comfortable this summer, we hope you'll consider your energy impact, particularly on those hot summer afternoons when cold lemonade tastes so good!



Ways to Save Around Your Home (IN THE SUMMER!)

Bedrooms

- Close blinds during the day to limit heat gain from the sun — especially on the east and west.
- Raise the A/C temp by 2 to 4 degrees and stay comfortable with a fan.

Living Room

- Use a smart power strip to completely turn off video games, computers and electronics when not in use.
- Install a programmable or smart thermostat to turn up the temperature when you are away for longer periods (6 to 8 hours or more) and bring it back to the desired temperature before you return.
- Turn fans off in unoccupied rooms.

Kitchen

- Choose ENERGY STAR[®] when it's time for new appliances! These products meet strict energy efficiency standards.
- Use your microwave or better yet, grill or move small cooking appliances outdoors to keep the heat outside.
- Give your dishwasher's air-dry setting a test-run.
- Clean the inside of your microwave and stovetop elements — it will improve the heat transfer.
- Decide what you want out of the refrigerator before you open the door.
- Use ENERGY STAR certified LEDs and plus, they can last more than 20 years.

Other Tips

- Add a timer or motion sensor to outdoor/porch lights (outside).
- Keep the cool air in: replace damaged weather stripping around doors and windows.
- Plant a tree to the west of your home to provide shade for years to come.

• Invest in a home energy audit. During the audit, a certified home performance specialist (HPS) evaluates your home and provides recommendations to make it more comfortable and use less energy.

idahopower.com/HomeEnergyAudit

Attic • Good attic insulation saves energy and makes your home more comfortable year-round.

Insulation

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Idaho Power recommends attic insulation of R-38 for climate zone 5 (green) or R-49 for climate zone 6 (blue).

Bonus Room

- Open windows on the top and bottom floors in the early morning to quickly flush the house with cool air.
- Plug computers, chargers and other electronic equipment into a power strip and switch it off when not in use. Standby power can account for 6 percent or more of a home's energy use.
- Enable your computer's power-save settings.

Bathrooms

- Use the exhaust fan to remove moisture fast then turn it off before you start sending cooled, conditioned air outside, too.
- Install faucet aerators and thermostatic shower valves to reduce hot water waste.

Laundry/Utility Room

- Ditch your dryer and hang your clothes out to dry. Tossing them in the dryer for five minutes before you hang them will soften the fabric.
- Wash full loads of laundry in warm or cold water and always rinse with cold. Using cold instead of hot can cut your laundry energy use in half.



- Garage Clean or replace your furnace filters at least twice each year to keep your HVAC system running well. YES, air conditioned air passes through your furnace!
 - Consider recycling second refrigerators and freezers — especially pre-1992 models. Keeping things cold in a hot garage makes compressors run longer.



Beautiful landscaping enhances property value and promotes a home's curb appeal. With a bit of extra planning, trees and other landscaping elements can further boost a home's long-term value by increasing comfort and saving energy year-round. Trees also improve air and water quality. Achieving these benefits requires choosing the right landscaping element for the right place.

Summer Savings

In southern Idaho, the summer sun travels high in the sky from east to west. In the winter, the sun is lower on the horizon and travels from southeast to southwest.

- To get the best shade benefit without blocking the winter sun, plant shade trees on the east and west. Given the long, hot afternoons and evenings, west is best.
- Trees that lose their leaves in the fall provide shade in the summer while allowing the winter sun to warm your home. Plant these on the west or east.
- A six- to eight-foot deciduous tree planted near your home will begin shading windows the first year, and, in 5 to 10 years, will usually grow to shade the roof.

 At our latitude, be cautious about planting to the south of your home — trees to the south won't help much with your summer cooling and could increase your winter heating bills. If you want trees on the south, choose smaller species and plant them farther from your home.

Trees, shrubs and groundcover plants shade the ground and pavement around the home. This reduces heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your home's walls and windows.

- Shade walls the first year with climbing vines planted on a lattice or trellis.
- Use a large bush or row of shrubs to shade a patio or driveway.
- Plant a hedge to shade a sidewalk.



Winter Savings

A mature windbreak can lower heating costs by 10 to 20 percent if you live in an area with frequent cold winds.

- The best windbreaks consist of a row of evergreen trees along the north or northwest side of your home.
- Plant the trees approximately 50 feet or more from the house.



Protect your landscaping investment:

- International Society of Arboriculture can help you find local professionals.
 treesaregood.com
- Arbor Day Foundation has information on tree planting for energy conservation. Order Tree City USA Bulletin #21. **arborday.org**
- I-Tree Design is an online tool sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service that allows you to map your home and evaluate the energy impact of planting various trees in different places around your home. **itreetools.org**

Planting Considerations

Planning

Determine where to plant your trees. Space constraints could limit the types of trees you consider. Start by creating a rough map of your yard. Include power lines and poles, driveways, walkways, streets, existing landscaping and other structures. Then ask:

- How big is your planting area? Ensure there is enough room for roots and the canopy to spread and keep the tree healthy without damaging driveways, sidewalks or other structures.
- What obstacles are in the space? Overhead lines can create a safety hazard as the tree grows.
- How will a tree affect other landscaping or outdoor activities? Will it shade favorite gardens?
- Will the tree impact your neighbors? Will the tree block a critical view?

Select the Right Tree

Medium or large deciduous (trees that drop their leaves in the fall) work best for shade trees. They shade your home during the hot summer months but allow the winter sun to warm your home during colder months. Planting any tree, especially evergreens, too close to your home on the south side can actually increase your energy use. While they provide shade in the summer, they may block the warm winter sun and cause your furnace to run longer. Evergreens make great wind blocks, so consider them for the windward side of your home or other areas of your yard where they won't shade your home during the cold winter months.

- When planning for shade, the distance from your home matters. The further you plant from your home, the taller the tree needs to be. The mature tree height should be tall enough to shade your home during the hottest part of the day.
- **Choose trees grown and rated for your area.** Check with a local nursery to determine what varieties thrive in your climate zone and soil.

- Check with local experts (nurseries and city or county arborists) to identify restrictions and see what trees work best for your area.
- Ask questions about site requirements such as soil preference, sun exposure, disease risks, watering needs and long-term care, such as pruning. Be flexible. Your favorite tree may not do well in your yard.

Long-term Care

Proper tree care, especially in the first few years of life, will affect the shape, strength and life span of your tree. Keeping trees healthy ensures their energy efficiency benefits.

- Add mulch up to 4 inches deep and at least 3 feet in diameter to help protect and insulate your tree. Keep mulch away from the trunk.
- Water immediately after planting and then monitor water closely. Consult your local nursery for watering tips specific to your species, soil type and local area.
- **Prune while trees are dormant** in late fall or early winter. Pruning in summer is fine for removing dead or broken branches.
- Plant properly planting techniques and timing differ depending on whether the tree is purchased bare root, balled and burlapped, or in a container. Consult with local experts or online resources for planting tips.

Be Safe

Trees with mature heights of 25 to 40 feet should be planted at least 15 feet from power lines, and trees that grow 60 feet or larger need to be at least 35 feet away. And always, before you plant, **call DIGLINE at 811** to locate underground utility lines and cables.

If you have trees growing too near a power line, call Idaho Power at 1-800-488-6151.

Shace Minus the Shade Trees

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) estimates that shading your home can reduce indoor temperatures by as much as 20° F. If you don't have the ability to plant large shade trees on the west, you still have options.

- Solar window screens look similar to regular insect screens, but provide more efficiency benefits and are among the most economical solutions. Dark colors generally provide the best combination of heat and glare reduction.
- Retractable or fixed awnings can reduce heat gain by up to 65 percent on south-facing windows and 77 percent on west-facing windows.
- Reflective window films can reduce heat gain by 50 to 75 percent, but will also reduce the sun's warming rays in the winter.
- Rollup shades and blinds can also provide shading on demand. While internal shading isn't as effective as external shading, using reflective surfaces, blinds that fit fairly tightly into the opening and window quilts can all help.

When evaluating options, focus first on shading windows and then the walls and roof.

Sources of Summer Heat Gain in Homes

- Windows 48%
- Ceiling 6%
- Walls & Doors 19%
- Infiltration 13%
- Internal Heat 14%



Cooking Outdoors Helps Boise Cystomer Save Energy

In the summer, using a microwave and grilling outdoors are great ways to save electricity and keep air conditioning costs down. We recently heard from a customer who found another fun way to make great meals while keeping the heat outside!

When Ethel Farnsworth, 98, received a solar oven as a gift 50 years ago, she quickly became an advocate for this energy-saving cooking method.

"My husband and I owned a Rhodes (Bake-N-Serv rolls) franchise when the owner of a solar oven company gave us an oven to promote our rolls and the ovens," Ethel said.

Ethel, a Boise customer and the mother of eight children, demonstrated how to use the oven made primarily from reflective aluminum, plastic and wood — by baking some cinnamon rolls on her back deck one recent sunny day.

"It's so practical," she said as the aroma from the rolls wafted around her and the backyard. "As long as there's direct sun, I can cook anything and everything from breads to beans, steaks, hard-boiled eggs, casseroles and desserts. You can even use it in the desert, mountains or on river trips. And if a burn ban is in effect because of forest fires, the portable solar oven can still be used if the sun is shining."

Remember, on hot summer days, the goal is to keep the heat out and the cool in. Limiting the use of indoor ovens, stovetops and other heatproducing tasks can increase your family's comfort and reduce air conditioning costs.





Grilled Pineapple & Chicken Skewers

- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 2 cups fresh or canned pineapple, cut into 1" cubes (reserve the juice)
- ¹/₂ red onion, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 green bell pepper, cut into 1" cubes
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 1" cubes

Marinade

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp mustard
- 1 Tbsp pineapple juice
- 2 tsp honey
- 1–2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp soy sauce

In a small mixing bowl, whisk together marinade ingredients. Cut chicken breast into 1–1 ½ inch pieces, add to marinade and stir to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour, longer for stronger flavor. If using bamboo skewers, be sure to soak in water for 30 minutes prior to assembling. Metal skewers may also be used. Assemble skewers — alternating chicken, pineapple chunks, onion and peppers (each skewer will have approx. 4 chunks of chicken). Heat grill to medium-high, or 375 degrees. Grill skewers until just beginning to brown, approx. 10 minutes each side.

Makes 4 servings of two skewers each.

Dietary information per serving:

Calories	268	Sodium	200mg
Fat	10g	Fiber	2.8g
Carbohydrate	20g	Cholesterol	65mg
Protein	27g		