

# Green Scene

As the weather is getting warmer, now is a good time to get your house in shape for the summer cooling season. While air conditioning is critical to the comfort of you and your family, there are actions you can take to conserve energy and improve the efficiency of your home and your air conditioning system. By following these steps, your house will be in better shape to handle those hot, humid days without putting an extra burden on your energy bill.

- Set your thermostat to a higher temperature in the summer. Consider installing a programmable thermostat. This is an excellent way to match the cooling needs of your home to your personal schedule. They typically offer savings of 10%–15% without compromising personal comfort.
- Replace your furnace filter. For homes with central air, it is important to change the filter before the start of the cooling season and on a monthly basis thereafter. Dirty filters restrict airflow and can cause the system to run longer and work harder, increasing energy use. Plug air leaks in your home. Weather strip and caulk any leaky doors and windows and install foam gaskets behind outlet covers.
- Check insulation levels. If necessary, add insulation in attics and crawl spaces. This will not only help to conserve energy, but will improve household comfort.

- Use energy efficient landscaping. Leafy trees and shrubs properly placed on the south and west side of your home can provide shade during the peak daytime heat. You can also reduce heat buildup by keeping blinds and curtains closed on windows facing the sun.
- Consider cooling alternatives for your home. Fans and dehumidifiers use less energy than air conditioners and can help to increase comfort by reducing humidity levels and maintaining steady air flow.
- When replacing air conditioners or other cooling equipment, choose energy efficient models. These may cost a little more, but can pay for themselves through lower energy usage over the lifetime of the equipment. See the Austin Utilities website at [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com) for more information about energy savings and rebate offers.

To learn more about saving energy, Austin Utilities invites you to attend a FREE informative Workshop on Monday, April 26th 7 p.m.-9 p.m. at the JC Hormel Nature center. For more information or to sign up call Dave @ 507-437-0822, space is limited, sign up today.



**TODAY'S TOPIC:**  
**Get your house in  
shape for summer**

*Green Scene*

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