

Keep cool and save cash this summer

Not so long ago, people lined up outside movie theaters because they offered an evening of air conditioning along with the latest screen stars. Now that air conditioning is available for every home, more consumers are choosing central air conditioning.

If you are installing a central air conditioning system for the first time or upgrading an existing system, you can benefit from some advice from the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute (ARI), the association representing manufacturers of central air conditioning and heat pump systems. Here are some common questions and answers:

How does an air conditioner work? By transferring heat—from the inside of a building, where it is not wanted, to the outside. Refrigerant in the system absorbs the excess heat and is pumped through a closed system of piping to an outside coil. A fan blows outside air over the hot coil, transferring heat from the refrigerant to the outdoor air. Because the heat is removed from the indoor air, the indoor area is cooled.

What should I do in advance to make sure that my air conditioning system will work efficiently this summer?

Have the system checked each year—before the peak cooling season—by a qualified contractor or service technician. Then, remember to keep the air filter clean and the outdoor unit free of leaves and debris.

If my air conditioner stops working, what is the most likely problem?

"The solution could be as simple as replacing a fuse, resetting a circuit breaker, or checking to see if the thermostat is set properly. If the cooling system doesn't run cool enough, the refrigerant may be low. Most likely, if the problem involves any major part, such as the compressor, you will hear strange noises similar to those of any mechanical equipment not running correctly, or the unit might not run at all.

Which is better—letting a central cooling system wear out before replacing it, or replacing it at some point before it wears out?

Because newer equipment usually is much more energy efficient than older systems, you might actually save money by replacing your old system before it completely wears out. Contact local contractors and ask for their estimates. In some cases, the money you save in reduced utility costs might pay back your purchase price of a new system years earlier than you might think.

Designer listens to kids

"Looking back, I realize that children have taught me the greatest lessons in life," says Antonio Torrice, co-author of *In My Room: Designing For and With Children* (Fawcett/Columbine, \$22.95). "From them, I've rediscovered the wonderment of youthful spontaneity, innocence and the kind of positive energy that makes you believe you can do anything."

In his experience designing for people with special needs, including children, Torrice observed just how often these people's perspectives were ignored, creating a less than ideal living environment.

During the two years he spent at the Devereux foundation, a home for emotionally troubled children, Torrice made the important discovery that attention had to be paid to children's physical as well as emotional needs.

When he visited their rooms, Torrice noted, "Their impersonal quarters had insufficient space for storing individual possessions. Furthermore, these children told me the places they occupied had another major flaw: Clocks and pictures were hung at an adult viewing level—too high for young eyes to see without straining."

Torrice advises keeping these and other considerations in mind when designing for children, the most important being the child's own taste and input. Children should have the right "to pick the palette that will permeate their world," says Torrice.

Expert advice for do-it-yourselfers on repairing concrete

Rough winter weather can leave your driveway and sidewalks cracked and crumbled. Repairing concrete each spring is not complicated or difficult if you follow a few basic guidelines. Before you tackle a repair job, though, it is important to understand exactly what concrete is, what it is made from and how it is used, in order to properly complete a repair job.

When concrete work is done properly, it is very durable. For centuries, concrete has been used as a basic building material because of its permanence and high compressive strength (its resistance to crushing). It also is one of the least expensive of all building materials. However, concrete has little resistance to bending and twisting and needs to be reinforced.

Concrete is a mixture of cement, sand, crushed stone and water. Cement is the basic ingredient in concrete and is made finer than flour. Most concrete is made of a manufactured product called Portland cement, named because of its resemblance to a rock found on the Isle of Portland.

According to Red Devil manufacturer of chemical products and tools for concrete repair, there are five basic steps to concrete repair: 1) clean out the area to be repaired; 2) assess the extent of the damage; 3) select the best method and product; 4) patch the area; and 5) dry and cure the area.

There are two safety tips to keep in mind before you begin. Whenever you work with concrete, always wear safety goggles to prevent it from splashing in your eyes. If you use a cleaning solvent, wear protective gloves.

To begin, thoroughly clean the area that you are repairing. You will get a better adhesive bond if the area is extremely clean. Most of the time, simply brush out the remaining particles. However, some projects may require using a cleaner, such as TSP-90® Heavy-Duty Powdered cleaner made by Red Devil. TSP-90 quickly deep cleans floors and walls. Its fortified cleaning agents penetrate and suspend dirt and grease. Rinse the sur-

face after you clean it with TSP-90.

After you have cleaned the area to be repaired, you need to assess the level of damage and determine the best way to repair it. If the damage is not extensive, use any of the pre-mixed patching compounds—latex, vinyl or epoxy—following the instructions that come with the product. There are several convenient, pre-mixed products in cartridges available from Red Devil.

Red Devil Onetime® Lite Patch and Repair for Stucco and Cement repairs is a fast-working, long-lasting compound that retains flexibility with excellent adhesion. You can use this to repair hairline cracks and holes in stucco walls, cement steps, walkways, stone foundations and in all areas excluding vehicular traffic areas.

Concrete and Mortar Repair in cartridge form is a Red Devil premium formula that gives fast, durable repairs. Fortified with silicone, Concrete and Mortar Repair is great for patching cracks in driveways and sidewalks or repairing mortar between bricks, stone and cinder blocks and on steps.

Bigger jobs

For larger, more extensive repairs, you will need to use a dry-mix (gravel mix) concrete. Red Devil also offers a line of dry mix powders that are convenient and easy to use. These products cure quickly and can withstand rain in less than 24 hours without any damage. They come in large quantities so they are economically practical. Once applied, these powders are strong enough to withstand automobile traffic. Remember to follow package instructions carefully.

Once the area has been filled, it is important to allow enough time for the cement or product to dry and cure. If an area is walked or driven on too soon, the patch will lose its strength and the damage will resurface.

Surface repairs of driveways and walks. Chisel out loose or broken fragments of concrete to a depth of one inch, and then use the chisel to thoroughly roughen the base of the cavity. Undercut the edges of the damaged area. Brush the surface



FOR A STRONG, LASTING CONCRETE REPAIR, fill larger cracks, holes and broken-up areas of the floor with permanent pre-mixed concrete and mortar repair. After leveling the repair with a cement finishing trowel, sprinkle the patch with water and finish with a light troweling for a smooth finish.

with a wire brush and wash out all loose particles. The surface to be patched should be damp but not wet. You might have to sponge out any water that remains.

Fill the cavity with the patching mix, tapping the patching mix in firmly and overfilling the cavity slightly to allow for shrinkage. Smooth the patch lightly with a wooden float. When the concrete begins to stiffen, finish with a wooden float or steel trowel. Let the patch cure for six days and keep traffic away from it during that time.

Cracks in driveways and walks. Cracks can be cleaned out, undercut, dampened and filled following the guidelines for surface repairs. If a large section of a walk or drive has been cracked or damaged, it must be removed and replaced with new concrete.

Cracked walls. Use a cold chisel to remove all loose material to a depth of one inch, undercut the area just beneath the surface, brush out all dust and thoroughly dampen the area to be patched.

Fill the cracks with the appropriate product. Smooth the surface and cure for six days. Repair cracks in joints by removing mortar ¼ inch deep and repointing. If

cracks are severe or continue to enlarge despite repair efforts, seek professional advice.

Cracked floors. Prepare the patch area as you would for a wall crack. When the crack is filled, the surface should be slightly higher than the surrounding floor. After it has set for 48 hours, grind the patch area flush with the floor, using an abrasive stone or a sheet of coarse emery paper over a block of wood.

Damaged steps. To repair a crumbling stair edge, chisel out a V-shaped section until you reach solid concrete. Brush away any loose material and dampen the exposed area. If the tread nosing was

flush with the riser, place a form board against the riser. If the tread nosing extended beyond the riser, make a form and reinforce the patch with coat-hanger wire. Paint the V-shaped area with cement paste and fill. Finish and cure for six days.

Some tips on choosing your paint

colors at different times of day and, if possible, on both cloudy and sunny days. You should also hang the cards in nooks and crannies of your room and note how shadows affect the color.

Hold the card at arm's length and rotate 360 degrees around the room you plan to paint. Envision the paint on the walls as you turn. See how the color changes in the different areas of the room.

How to use samples

At the decorating center, most paint is viewed on a horizontal surface with a white or off-white background. Remember that you will probably never see the color again in this way. The shade will always intensify when applied to a vertical surface. This is why it's important to "live" with the stripe card for a few days before making a final decision. Some dealers catering to the profes-

sional design market may have available larger chips drawn from a designer library. Ask your independent retailer for expert advice on the type of paint you need.

Paint can be the fastest and least expensive way to recreate your living environment. By following these tips, you can easily choose colors that express your personality with confidence and verve.

Best colors

First, identify your favorite colors. If no one single shade comes to mind, consider your favorite clothing, jewelry, and artwork. What colors predominate? Flip through decorating magazines and clip photos of room settings that inspire you. A unifying theme or color often exists. Or consider geography. Peach tones are popular in the Southwest while New Englanders lean toward colonial blues.

Second, bring a sample of the shades you like to your local decorating center. You may wish to select color around a favorite area rug, fabric, or painting.

Third, make good use of the store's paint color displays. They are designed to help you. Paint manufacturers such as Pratt & Lambert have simplified the paint color selection process by incorporating consumer preferences into their displays.

An effective way to begin is to stand about eight feet away from the display and look for the range of colors that most attracts you. You can then concentrate your search in these color families.

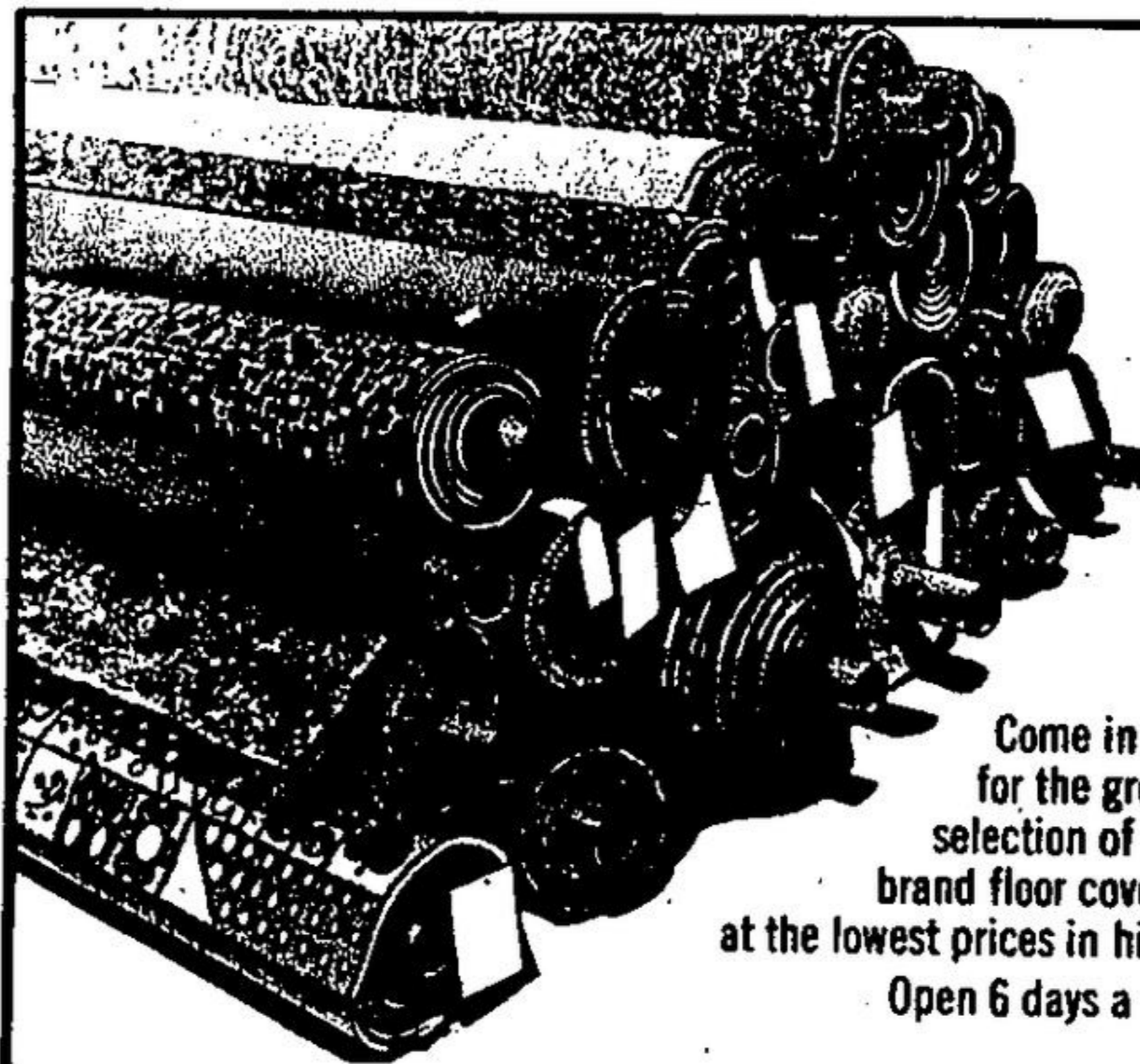
A key element is the arrangement of colors. Displays that coordinate each row horizontally complement the natural movements of the eye.

Jean Luck says that the shopper's eye travels across the display seeking a favorite color family. Rich, clear midtones

stop the eye at the chosen family and direct it vertically to color choices.

Lighting is critical to color selection. Look for a display offering bright simulated natural daylight so you won't have to view color stripe cards outside the store. Most shoppers find stripe cards easier to work with than cards of a single color, and prefer a display arrangement that shows the entire stripe card, rather than just the top one or two colors.

When you've chosen the right shades, bring the stripe cards home with you and place them on walls, cabinets, ceilings—wherever you plan to paint. Observe the



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