

Ask the Inspector: Keep your cool this summer without an air conditioner

Q: I don't have an air conditioner. Is there anything I can do to reduce the temperature in my house during the summer?

A: Aside from typical solutions, such as installing a window-mounted air conditioner for cooling an unbearably hot room, there are several things you can do to help reduce a house's temperature, including:

- Sheltering windows with awnings and shrubbery and keeping blinds closed on hot, sunny days to prevent the sun from increasing the interior temperature.
- Installing compact fluorescent lighting to produce less waste heat than incandescent/halogen lights.
- Keeping lights and computers turned off when possible.
- Cooking outdoors (i.e. use a barbecue) to avoid creating indoor heat.
- Hanging clothes outside to dry; clothes dryers generate a lot of indoor heat.

Q: I am considering installing a new central air conditioner. What type should I buy?

Look for the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating (SEER) for the unit. A high SEER indicates a more energy-efficient air conditioner. New air conditioners sold in Canada have SEERs ranging from 10 to 17, with 17 being the most energy efficient and 10 being the least.

The type of refrigerant used in the unit should also be a consideration. The two types of refrigerant available are R-22 (Freon) and R-410A (Puron). Until recently, Freon was the only type of refrigerant available in air conditioners. However, Freon contains chlorine compounds which, if released into the atmosphere due to normal wear and tear or equipment failure, destroy the ozone layer and contribute to global warming. Recent international agreements have created a plan to cease production of Freon in the next few years. This has already effectively reduced the world supply of Freon, driving up its cost to the consumer. Puron does not contain the same ozone depleting properties as Freon. Both Freon and Puron air condi-



Awnings and shrubbery can keep a home cooler in the summer.

tioning systems are available; however, the benefits of installing a Puron system should be evaluated when considering repairing an older system or installing a newer system.

Q: What can I do to maintain my central air conditioner in good working condition?

Here are a few suggestions:

- Inspect and clean/replace the blower fan filter (usually located in the return air duct at the furnace) every two months or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Vacuum or brush clean the outdoor coil to keep it clear of dirt, leaves, and grass clippings; the coil can be carefully cleaned with a garden hose after debris is vacuumed off.
- Both the blower fan and outdoor fan should be cleaned and lubricated where applicable, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- If there is a humidifier damper, make sure it is closed for the summer to reduce the unnecessary addition of mois-

ture-laden air to the home.

If, after completing these suggestions, your air conditioner is performing poorly, we recommend you hire a qualified contractor to undertake a more thorough servicing, such as checking the refrigerant level or making electrical or mechanical checks and adjustments. As with all mechanical equipment, regular servicing by a qualified contractor in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications is recommended.

Q: Can a central air conditioner be tested for proper operation at any time?

No. Unfortunately there are some limitations to when air conditioning systems can be tested or damage to the compressor may result. Air conditioning systems should not be tested when the outdoor temperature is below 18°C or has been below 18°C in the past 24 hours, or when the power has been on for less than 12 to 24 hours. Under these circumstances, refrigerant in the compressor can mix with lubricating oil, providing poor lubrication and potentially resulting in seizing the compressor. Given that compressors are the most expensive component to replace on an air conditioner, it is important to not operate them during the above-noted conditions.

Q: How long can I expect my central air conditioner to last?

There are many components in an air conditioner; however, most of these components, with the exception of the compressor, can often be repaired or replaced. Failure of the compressor on an older air conditioner often results in complete replacement. Given that the compressor is considered to be the "heart" of the air conditioner, life expectancies for air conditioners are often likened to the life expectancy of the compressor. In Canada, life expectancies for compressors have generally been established to be on the order of 12 years.

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Liz Crighton, Sales Rep.

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COUNTRY BUNGALOW ON ALMOST ONE ACRE \$319,000

Tucked away off the road on a little lane you will find this quaint and lovely 3 bedroom bungalow. It is totally updated, modern, open concept, with large bedrooms. Most importantly this home has been updated with a new furnace and new septic system. This little country Hide-A-Way is surrounded by pretty views and in a great location. So don't just drive by, you really have to come inside to appreciate how nice it is... MLS # X1085424



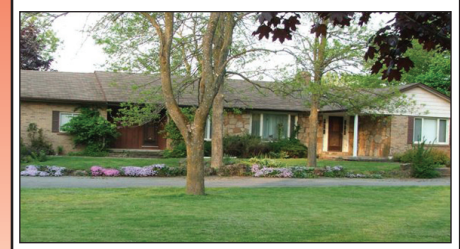
CUSTOM BUILT BUNGALOW ON QUIET CUL-DE-SAC \$379,000

This elegant bungalow in Erin was built in 1998. Professionally landscaped grounds could be just what you are looking for. It's Open concept, luxurious and much bigger inside than you would guess from the outside. Double car garage, shed with hydro, central air, 4 washrooms, two gas fireplaces, gorgeous deck and yard across from a park. The basement is fully finished and ready for Nanny, Teens or In-laws. MLS # X1137581



MOUNT FOREST - \$349,000

The outside is so lovely that this home has been featured on Charity Garden Tours... But to get inside... I tell you! The current owners have meticulously renovated every inch, preserving architectural integrity and ensuring this home is mechanically and structurally right up to date. Every room is elegant and bright. The location is the "Best Street in Town" and Mount Forest really has everything - well except rush hour stress and noise. You will be amazed!! MLS#X1117241



ELEGANT COUNTRY BUNGALOW - 14 ACRES \$772,000

This bungalow was built and positioned to take full advantage of the magnificent scenery. Totally awesome location, on a paved road in the most S/E part of Erin Township. This brick stone home has large principal rooms. Formal Living and Dining rooms and eat-in Kitchen that opens to Family room. All Season Solarium overlooks breathtaking pond and pool. Lower level (because it was built into a hill) is at ground level too and has tons of natural light and air on 2 sides. Enjoy the photos but I suggest to come take a look! MLS # X1154330



THE CHARM OF OLD, THE QUALITY OF NEW \$449,000

Large Family Home beautifully restored and structurally updated and designed to meet the needs of a busy professional family. Main floor laundry. Huge modern Kitchen, great for entertaining. The flow of the house is excellent with large principal rooms, big bright windows, wide and gracious hallways and good size closets. (This old one even has a great finished rec room in the basement) Sitting high on a hill (2 acres) with pretty views for miles and you can walk to the Village for an ice cream! MLS # X1134597



"COUNTRY RETREAT" \$1,280,000

95.5 rolling acres, offering 2 stocked ponds, river and wet land, woods and high dry fields with spectacular views! Guest house, Conference/Banquet Facility able to seat 75 (zoned for use and fully licensed) Let your imagination lead you to Erin! There is a separate 3 bedroom coach house and bank barn plus pool and hot tub. Location is central to all that ERIN - And the Head Waters have to offer. MLS # X1116018



99.2 ACRES - \$870,000

Turn of The Century Home, Lovingly maintained & updated by the same owner for the past 25 years (newer 2 storey addition which flows beautifully with the original house) Large bank barn, small orchard, 99.2 rolling acres on one of the most beautiful lines Erin has to offer (South of the Village) This property has ponds, pasture, (38 acres currently fields of hay) and a large hardwood forest in the rear. (Maple and Beech) Great trails. Bring your dog for a walk with me. MLS # X1137477



EXECUTIVE ESTATE BUNGALOW \$624,500

Well if you think you can build this over 2400 sq.ft. home today, in Erin, on a big - no really big, well positioned lot, with over \$100M in builder upgrades (including a Florida room and a third Garage) You must be a builder. Please also note things like granite counters, top 9' ceilings, were standard features with this Homes of Distinction builder). This beautiful Bungalow is in one of the most sought after executive subdivisions. Close to everything our village has to offer, good house proud neighbours, neutral and sophisticated colours just waiting for you to add personality.