

HOMES

On a roll: Adjustable awnings keep sun out, cool in

Dear Jim: The sun's heat and glare are pretty intense through our windows and my furniture is fading. I have seen some attractive adjustable awnings. Are decorative window awnings really very effective? — Kay M.

Dear Kay: New awning designs are very effective for shading windows (blocks 60 percent of heat). Awnings with decorator fabrics are becoming quite popular for use on homes, both for shading windows and for protection over doors.

Installing awning kits will not only lower your air-conditioning costs and improve your comfort, but it can increase the life of your furniture, carpeting, drapes, etc. The same ultraviolet (UV) rays that cause fading actually degrade and weaken the fibers in your indoor furnishings.

The new lightweight awnings, with strong aluminum frames (hidden under the fabric), require little maintenance. An occasional brushing of the awning fabric and rinsing with water and Ivory Flakes keeps it looking like new. Many awnings have a five-year warranty on the hardware and the fabric.

The basic design choices are



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retractable (adjustable) and fixed. Retractable awnings give you precise control over the level of shading year-round. In the winter, you may want to let more sun in for free heat. Keep in mind

though, furniture fading occurs in the winter too.

From indoors, using a pull tape or a switch, you adjust the awning position to cover as much glass as you wish. One small 1/2 hole is all that is required for the tape. For the ultimate convenience, install a remote controlled electric motor, which is hidden in the awning fabric tube.

As you open a retractable awning, two spring-loaded arms keep the fabric taut for an attractive appearance. For privacy, security or during storms, some models (like the Solaro and Perma System) adjust nearly all the way down (160 degrees) so the awning lays almost flat against the window.

Fixed designs, because of their simplicity, are less expensive.

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When choosing one, it is important to have it sized properly. The correct size depends on the window size, your area's latitude and window orientation. They are also the easiest to install.

One new design, Poncashade, is delivered to your house with a preassembled hinged frame in a flat box. The acrylic fabric is already attached. Just drill four holes to attach it. It took me about 10 minutes to install one over my own back door.

If you are primarily interested in the appearance of awnings, English-style canopy designs are a good choice. These are available in three, four or five-rib, ellipse or circular designs. Retractable canopy designs are available, but they do not adjust. They are either fully up or extended.

For more information about awnings, write to the address at the end of this column. Please include \$3 and a business-size SASE. Or log onto www.dulley.com and instantly download Update Bulletin 736 — buyer's guide to

adjustable and fixed awning kits, sizes, fabrics, features and an awning sizing worksheet.

Dear Jim: I am getting quotes on an energy-efficient room addition that will be heated with solar and a pellet stove. The contractor suggested a punch list for the final 10 percent of the costs. What does this mean? — Ron D.

Dear Ron: What your contractor is probably referring to is a list of detailed items that need to be finished or corrected at the end of construction work. This protects both you and the contractor.

What typically happens is that you and the contractor will go through the room addition together and you will note anything that needs to be fixed. As these items are corrected, they are "punched" off of the list.

James Dulley's column appears Saturdays. Write to him at The Reporter, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244

Simple frame assembly

Do-it-yourself awning kit over my back door. Notice solar cell panel and solar attic fan on roof

Decorative fixed canopy awnings in many styles

The proper awning tilt and size is critical for effective shading of windows - varies by region

Mini-retractable window awning opens from indoors

MARTHA

Continued from Page E1

Fabric frames

Cover the mats of framed photographs with bright, fine-textured linen or a patterned fabric such as gingham, which works well with simple frames and photos. Lay the mat on the fabric, and, using a

Summer is a good season to pare down. Removing excess clutter from shelves and tabletops will immediately make your house feel lighter and airier. And filling the house with bouquets and summery wildflower sprays is the very best way to bring the beauty of the season indoors.

smooth it into place. Trim any excess with scissors, then glue the fabric to the back of the mat.

Cheerful tables

A tablecloth in a sunny print or plaid can transform your kitchen

finished tablecloth to be, then decide the width of the finished border. To determine the size of the center square, subtract twice the width of the border from the dimensions of the finished cloth, adding 1 inch to your total for

should equal those of the center square, plus twice the width of the finished border, plus three inches for hem and seam allowances.

Sew the strips to the center