

Sail away

Create cool spaces with some stylish shading.

Artistic, creative, shapely, and elegant. Shading devices in the twenty first century are no longer solely about function.

Yes, shading devices are still about keeping unwanted direct sunlight from overheating your home, but the wide range of styles, textures, and construction materials available means that shading devices are also about artistic expression, and extending or complementing the style of your home.

There are two main types to consider: fixed shading devices and seasonal ones. Fixed devices such as eaves and pergolas have been the traditional mainstay for shading. More recently, however, sails of all shapes and sizes have added new style lines and elegance to shading. Sails can be put up and awnings pulled up and down only when needed, so you have far more control over how much sun you invite into your living space. Another option, albeit a more expensive one, is motorised awnings.

If you're wondering how much heat comes through the average window on a clear day, just imagine that for every square metre of glass in your house

you have a single bar radiator heater turned on for every hour of direct sunlight. This sounds good for winter, but on a hot summer's day, why would you want a bank of heaters firing away at every window? Shading can block up to 90 per cent of this heat.

The science of shading is simple. In winter the sun is lower on the horizon than it is in summer. This means we can design structures such as eaves and awnings, particularly on the north side of the house, that allow the winter sun to enter but still exclude the hot summer sun.

The east and west sides of a home are a little more problematic but nevertheless solvable. In summer, sunrise and sunsets happen further to the south than those in winter. Place fixed vertical structures just south of east or west facing windows. These combined with horizontal structures can almost completely protect the windows from the sun.

Of course the exact size and shape of the shading device you choose will depend on the local terrain, the style of your house and whether there is any surrounding vegetation.

Plants and landscaping play a very important

part in reducing unwanted glare and heat gain. For best results, plant deciduous vines or trees to the north, and deciduous or evergreen trees to the east and west. Evergreen plants are recommended for tropical and some hot dry climates.

The last word on shading is lifestyle. Remember when designing the shading strategy for your home that outdoor living is such an enjoyable and important part of Australian life. Consider incorporating shading for outdoor eating, lounging and play.

Stepping out of the burning sun into the blissful cool of shade is always a moment of great relief in summer. In the twenty first century, shading is as much about adding style to your property as it is about reducing the cost of running your home.

For more information:

Your Home website
www.yourhome.gov.au





Shading tips

- Install shading devices over windows and doors.
- Lighter coloured shading reflects more heat.
- Use plants to shade your home, particularly windows.
- Use umbrellas or sails to shade and protect outdoor living areas.
- Choose shading devices suitable for your climate zone and house orientation.