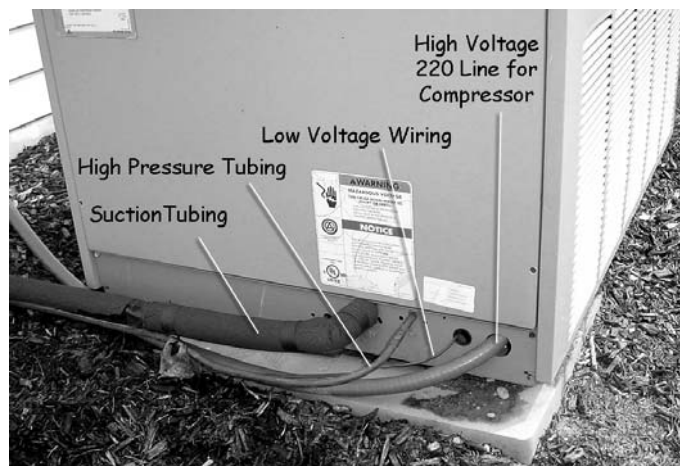


Get the most from your air conditioning

Air conditioning is the greatest thing. I think we take it for granted sometimes and leave it on all the time. If it is not too muggy, open windows and use portable or ceiling fans instead of operating your air conditioner. Open windows on both sides or both ends of your house to create air flow. Even mild air movement of 1 mph can make you feel three or four degrees cooler. Make sure your ceiling fan blades are turned for summer -- you should feel the air blowing downward. There is a switch on the side of the motor that allows you to select which direction the blades turn. Also make sure your attic fan is turned on if you have one. Consider getting one if you don't. The attic fan helps to keep the extreme heat of summer from building up in the attic and transferring that heat to your home through the ceiling. Turn off unnecessary lights. Light bulbs generate a lot of heat. Do you remember the toy oven that baked cookies using only a light bulb for heat?

Plant a bush or bushes that will shade your outside compressor but be careful you don't block the air flow. If you already have bushes check to see if they are too close to your unit and need trimming. Also check with the ARC Committee if you go out more than three feet from the house or you could be arrested and possibly flogged (just kidding). Also make sure there are no weeds or vines growing into the air conditioner that could block air flow or cause damage as they grow. Be careful around the AC unit tubing and low voltage wiring with trimmers or shovels. The larger tubing is the Freon return and



should feel cold to the touch and the smaller tubing is the liquid under pressure and should feel warm while the compressor is running. If you accidentally cut the low voltage wiring the unit will not run but the damage can easily be repaired. If you knock a hole in either of the tubing's, that is serious and you will lose the gas charge and lubricating oil. So be very careful and warn your landscaper also. Change air filters at the beginning of the cooling season and at the beginning of the heating season. Use a programmable thermostat with your air conditioner to adjust the setting at night or during the day when no one is home. Do not place lamps or TVs near your air conditioning thermostat. The heat from these appliances will cause the thermostat to think it is warmer in the house than it is and make the air conditioner run longer. During the cooling season, if you have hot air heat, make sure your registers are set for air conditioning, upper vents open and lower vents closed. Remember to change them back in the fall.

Install white window shades, drapes, or blinds on the sunny side to reflect heat away from the house. Close curtains on south and west facing windows during the sunny part of the day.

Because of the angle of the sun, trees or an approved trellis will best shade west-facing windows.

Apply sun-control or other reflective films on south-facing windows.

I am beginning to run out of ideas for this column, so if you have something you want me discuss in this newsletter send me an email at rmattsso@optonline.net and I will do my best to cover it.

This and previous around the house articles can be retrieved on the web at http://www.umc-1.com/fairways_legend_maintenance_arti.htm