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Grow your summer energy savings

Fresh, homegrown food — whether it's shopping at the local farmers' market or sharing the abundance of garden tomatoes with a neighbor — is one of the best parts of summer. It's amazing how just a few seeds, some fertilizer and water can turn into a bounty.

Just as simple steps can yield an abundance of food, simple steps can also result in energy savings. You don't need to be a farmer or botanist to know that plants need water — just like you don't have to be a lineworker or engineer to know that adjusting the thermostat or turning off lights can reduce your monthly electric bill.

Summer months bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. But why? Cooling your home accounts for a large portion of your monthly energy use, and the hotter it gets, the harder (and longer) your air conditioner works to keep you cool.

One of the great things about being part of C & L Electric Cooperative is that we're locally owned by you, our members. So instead of making profits, we can focus on helping our community. That's why we want to help you keep your money in your wallet.

Most people don't know everything about electricity, and that's why we're here to help you. There are no investors making profits here — just knowledgeable people with local jobs, working for our neighbors to ensure there is electricity available when needed.

Consider these simple no-cost energy savings tips this summer:

- **Raise your thermostat.** A smart, programmable thermostat learns your household's patterns and adjusts itself when the house is not occupied, reducing energy use when no one is home.
- **Install window coverings.** About 76% of sunlight coming through a standard, double-pane window enters and heats the home, according to the Department of Energy.
- **Seal air leaks with caulk and weatherstripping.** Leaks allow cooled air to escape and may contribute to moisture problems within the home.

Remember, fans cool people, not rooms. Be sure to turn fans off in unoccupied rooms.

- **Run ceiling fans.**
- **Lower your water heater thermostat.** Water heaters set higher than 120 degrees can waste anywhere from \$31 to \$61 annually in energy costs, according to the Department of Energy.

Find more ways to save at energy.gov.

5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.

1. Raise your thermostat.

The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperature, the more you'll save.

2. Install window coverings

like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.

3. Seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping

around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.

4. Run ceiling fans

for additional cooling, but turn them off when you leave the room.

5. Lower your water heater thermostat

to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.



Source: Department of Energy

Electrical safety do's and don'ts

When it comes to electrical safety, take time to understand important do's and don'ts! **May is Electrical Safety Month**, which promotes awareness of electrical safety and the importance of taking proper precautions when dealing with electricity.

Take a few moments to examine your home for any potential fire hazards with these tips:

- **Electrical outlets should never be overloaded.** Be sure ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are installed in bathrooms, kitchens and other areas where a water source is present.

- **Conduct regular tests to ensure your smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms are working properly.** Every year, more than 358,000 home fires occur in the U.S. It only takes a second and could save a life.

- **Check your electrical cords.**

Even the slightest bit of fraying creates a safety risk. Remember: Extension cords should only be used temporarily.

- **Avoid water around electric appliances.** Keep electrical cords away from sinks, bathtubs and pools. If a device gets wet, unplug it, and let it dry completely before using it again.

- **Teach children about electrical safety** by telling them not to stick objects into outlets and never to touch electronics with wet hands.

Electrical safety is crucial for every household every day to prevent accidents, fires and injuries. Find more safety tips at safeelectricity.org.



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Power up your lawn care with electric equipment

BY ANNE PRINCE

Electric lawnmowers have come a long way since the days of extension cords tethering you to an outlet. Battery-powered mowers offer the same freedom of movement as gas-powered models but with reduced noise and maintenance.

Battery life was once a major drawback to making the switch to electric lawn tools. But today's growing demand for electric equipment has resulted in major advancements for lithium-ion batteries, making them more reliable, cost-effective and efficient. For most consumers, electric lawn tools can get the job done just as well as gas-powered models.

Many electric mowers offer push-button starts, and because they are lighter, they are easier to maneuver around tight turns. Like their gas-powered counterparts, electric mowers are available in push, self-propelled/walk-behind and riding models. And there's no need to refill gas cans or change oil and air filters, resulting in less hassle and maintenance.

Like mowers, electric blowers, string trimmers and chainsaws have fewer moving parts, require minimal maintenance and are quieter. Because electric tools are generally lighter in weight, they're also more ergonomic and easier to maneuver.

Choose electric equipment to meet your needs

Choosing the right type and size mower is particularly important for spaces larger than half an acre. If you have a large property, consider purchasing an extra battery to ensure uninterrupted workflow.

Many manufacturers offer interchangeable batteries and chargers, providing flexibility and convenience. Choosing a single brand can ensure charging compatibility across your lawn tools and streamline charging.

While both gas and electric lawn tools can get the job done, electric equipment generally requires less maintenance, is less expensive to operate and is kinder to the environment.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Benefits of Electric Equipment

- Battery-powered equipment produces zero emissions
- No hassle and mess from gasoline and oil
- Quieter and more reliable than gas-powered equipment
- Require less energy to do the same amount of work as gas-powered tools

Considerations Before Going Electric

- Purchasing from a single brand can streamline charging
- Consider the size of your property and battery run time
- Backup batteries may be needed for larger properties
- Electric equipment is pricier up front