

Awnings enhance appearance, protect home from sun

BY MARK EDWARD NERO
Copley News Service

Awnings can sometimes be unassuming additions to a home or business, but these simple stretches of cloth or metal can pay big dividends once they're installed.

Though simple in design, the benefits of awnings — for both homes and businesses — can be numerous. An awning over a window, a terrace or a balcony provides shade without shutting out the view or the surroundings. A house can be enhanced when its windows are framed in an appropriate color. Terraces, decks and balconies can be transformed into airy, outdoor rooms.

Stationary awnings can enhance the appearance of homes while protecting structures. Awnings protect homes against the sun and rain, not only saving in utility costs, but also helping prevent premature replacement of windows and doors.

According to the Professional Awning Manufacturers Association, an international trade group, more energy is lost through glass doors and windows in a typical building than through any other construction element. While window films and tinted glass will reduce heat gain

and glare, awnings accomplish the same thing and substantially boost energy savings, says the PAWA.

Also, studies conducted by the American Society of Heating and Air Conditioning Engineers show that when the sun shines directly on south-facing windows, fabric awnings reduce heat gain by 55 percent to 65 percent. For western exposure, the reduction in heat gain is 72 percent to 77 percent.

Along with energy conservation and protection from the elements, another appeal of awnings is that more of them are retractable, so they can be drawn back if desired. With these, the operator controls the amount of light or shade allowed to enter, thereby avoiding excessive heat, sun exposure and mild rains. The use of shading can protect carpet, furniture and drapes by blocking ultraviolet rays.

With recent advancements in technology, many retractable awnings are fully automatic, with a wide range of remote control options. There are even light sensors available that can operate awnings. Another technological advance are sensors that keep an eye on wind speeds and retract the awning when speeds make it unsafe

to have it extended.

Jamie Havens of San Diego-based Awning Products Unlimited says the main reasons his customers buy awnings are to keep their homes cooler, to shade newly-installed patios and to cover outdoor storage areas. The demand for awnings, he said, extends to many shapes, sizes and patterns.

"We range anything from 3 feet to over 100 feet in length," he said. "And from 6 feet to 30 feet in height."

The price range is wide as well, he said. "It can go from \$300 to \$50,000."

Awning Products Unlimited sees about four to six new clients a week. Of that number, about 75 percent are businesses, said Havens, who has been a framer with the company for 20 years.

Spanish-style awnings are the most favored style his store sells, Havens said.

"People are going for fancy now," he said.

When it comes to awning style and texture, PAMA and other awning experts suggest making sure that, if using a cloth awning, the fabric is treated with a UV stabilizer that resists fading, as well as coated with Teflon to make it stain-resistant and has undergone an anti-mildew treatment, to prevent spots from

appearing.

Color choice and types of material are important considerations, too, especially when it comes to saving energy. Light-colored awnings maintain temperatures closer to the outdoor air temperature, so as a result air temperature under the awnings isn't raised appreciably. However, dark-colored awnings absorb more solar radiation and may need to be vented to reduce radiation and heat buildup underneath.

Among other tips offered by the experts: the actual skeleton of the awning should always be made of powder-coated aluminum and stainless steel. Aluminum is renowned for its light weight and stainless steel for its strength. Brackets are among the fixtures that need to be made of stainless steel, since they will secure the awning to the building.



CNS Photo/Durasol Awnings

Colorful awnings are more than just stylish additions to your home, they extend your outdoor living space and help protect your home against weather.

Reasons for clutter vary, results the same

BY INDRANI SEN
Newsday

There are many reasons why we hang on to clutter. Laura Benko-Ceriello offers a glimpse into the psychology of clutter and how it affects our lives as well as some solutions for dealing with it all.

A need for abundance
Symptoms: Buying and storing in bulk; cooking in mass; feeling guilty if you waste or throw things out.

Solutions: Give everything a home. It's OK to have stuff, but try to keep it in organized locations.

Unclear goals, priorities
Symptoms: Taking on too much; feeling scattered; bouncing from one thing to another; accumulating things you don't use.

Solutions: Narrow things down. Create a system that suits your way of living and thinking so you'll stick with it.

Fear of success or failure
Symptoms: Using disorganization to hold yourself

back; Making excuses rather than taking baby steps forward.

Solutions: Allow yourself to exceed your own expectations — start with small tasks with realistic goals.

A need to retreat
Symptoms: Using clutter to provide insulation and a feeling of safety.

Solutions: Give yourself a lift. Start with a room you love and keep only what you absolutely love.

Fear of losing creativity
Symptoms: Believing that chaotic, disorganized surroundings enhance creativity.

Solutions: Remember that being organized releases rather than constricts creativity.

A need for distraction
Symptoms: Creating chaos to ignore larger underlying issues; avoiding things you'd rather not face or deal with.

Solutions: Take quiet time for yourself, and focus on what you've been neglecting. Reward yourself for noticing.

Sentimental attachments
Symptoms: Holding on to the past; not letting go of objects that no longer serve you and that you may not even like.

Solutions: Offer furniture and family mementos to relatives who may appreciate or need them more than you. If you don't like it, give it to someone who does.

Perfectionist tendencies
Symptoms: Having unfinished projects; thinking nothing is ever good enough; needing to control.

Solutions: Let others help. Start with a small project and follow through to completion.

"Just-in-case" clutter
Symptoms: Holding on to things in case you might need them in the future.

Solutions: Trust that the universe will provide for you. If you need that item again, trust that it will come to you in some way.

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