

Swamp cooler maintenance is probably on your mind if keeping your cooler working well with less repairs is important to you. There are some of products you may want to consider using to reduce the need for swamp cooler maintenance and repairs.

Tired of changing cooler pads half way through the season? Depending on how hard your water is the mineral and scale build up in the swamp cooler might be extreme. The more scale builds up on the cooler pads, the worse your evaporative cooler works. Other concerns include water cleanliness and muggy smell. You might consider a combination of these products to help keep your cooler lasting longer and working better than ever before.

- **D-Scale and evaporative cooler cleaner.** When an evaporative cooler gets mineral and scale buildup it might be time to use a cleaner or some form of de-scaler. This will help the cooler pads last longer. Also, with the pads cleaned it can help keep the air temperature cooler because more water can be absorbed into the pads. For most cleaners you pour a certain amount of cleaner into the evaporative cooler pan with the water and run on pump mode for about 20 minutes. The scale and minerals will get washed out into the pan for you to drain out. Then you drain the water, flush it out and refill the pan with clean water.
- **Purge pump.** This will clean the water in the swamp cooler automatically every 8 hours or so by pumping a percentage of the water out of the pan. Purge pumps are easy to hook up since they just plug into the existing cooler pump. Keep your water and air fresh by having the old water pumped out and clean water coming in and through the pads. *The discarded water could be utilized by a nearby garden, plants or trees if you want to avoid wasting water.*
- **Water filter.** Filter incoming water with an inline filter. Preventing scale buildup is much easier than removing hard water deposits. So how about a nice in line filter that will filter the water coming into your swamp cooler before it gets pumped through the pads. This can reduce scale and calcium deposits leading to longer lasting pads. Inline filters can be installed anywhere on the water source before the water goes into the evaporative cooler. This type of filter can help prevent extra build up on your evaporative cooler and pads.
- **Zinc Anode Rod.** Keep the musty cooler smell from building up with a Zinc Anode Rod. These are great for controlling rust, mold, and mildew in a swamp cooler. Some swamp coolers can begin to smell and this could be due to growing bacteria in the swamp cooler. Water, warm days, and stagnant water are a perfect mold breeding ground. Control this by adding a zinc anode rod which inhibits the bad stuff from growing. Keeping growth under control will help keep your air quality safe and the cool air smelling fresher.
- **Tablets.** Drop in tablets are another way to help prevent mineral and scale buildup. These are time released tablets that you can drop into the cooler pan and leave. They are a lot like using the cooler cleaner but you leave these in and they require no measuring. If your evaporative coolers pads are already clean you might consider this as a good combination with a purge pump to give you better water with little or no buildup.

**Note:** Don't forget to winterize your swamp cooler to help keep it in good shape.

Cold nights are the first sign that Winter is coming. The best way to deal with the months of cold weather is to be prepared.

Why winterize a swamp cooler?

- Prevent a frozen water line that may become damage and will need to be replaced next summer.
- Prevent damage to the swamp cooler because of frozen water or rusting.
- Prevent heat loss from the swamp cooler vent.
- First locate the valve that supplies water to the swamp cooler and shut off the water. The water supply is often located somewhere where it can be protected from the cold like in the crawl space under the house.
- Then disconnect the water line from the swamp cooler and put pull it down off the side of the house. If possible disconnect the water line from the water supply valve also, and then blow out the extra water in the line so it does not freeze and crack.
- If you can't easy disconnect it just be sure to drain it as best you can.
- Tuck the water line into a storage place that is warm enough that it will not freeze.

It is important to drain all of the standing water at the base of the cooler. To do this remove a side or two of the swamp cooler and drain the remaining water out of the pan. It is a good idea to use sponges and a bucket to absorb as much water as possible. Sometimes there is a drain valve in the pan of the swamp cooler but removing and trying to reseal it can cause a leak. Sponging out the pan gets more water out and prevents the problem of the drain valve not sealing. You can also use the sponge to clean out that extra dirt on the inside walls of the swamp cooler so it will be fairly clean when you go to start it up in the spring. If there is a lot of mineral and dirt build up in the swamp cooler pan you can use a shop vac to clean it out before sponging it clean.

*Optional:* when the pan is dry coat the bottom of the pan with a water tight metal sealer to prevent rusting. Another option is to wait until spring to check for leaks and seal them.

The swamp cooler pads will need to be changed before it is used again after the winter months. When to change the pads is really up to you. Some people like to change the pads as part of the winterizing process so that when spring comes they can just hook the water up and be ready to go. I prefer to replace the pads in the spring so they are as fresh as possible for the hot season.

A swamp cooler cover will protect the unit from the elements during the winter months. Measure your swamp cooler before purchasing a cooler cover because covers are designed to fit snugly on a specific sized cooler. Swamp cooler covers are easy to install, they just slip over the swamp cooler and tie down on the bottom and on one side of the unit. Many covers protect against rain, snow, sun and dirt and can be reused year after year. The vent panels in the side of the swamp cooler reduce condensation (which can damage the metal inside of your cooler), and wind lofting so it won't fly away as easily. Note: If you are looking to save money you can use a tarp to cover your swamp cooler. A tarp can be tied down with rope or duct tape. The only problem I see with this is you can get condensation with no air moving through which can help the internal cooler parts rust faster.

The final step to winterizing your swamp cooler is to cover the vent. The vent where your swamp cooler blows air into the house is also a possible source of heat loss in the winter. It is a good idea to close the vents and seal it off during the winter months.

An easy solution is to cut a double piece of cardboard or a piece of insulation to the size of the opening. From inside the house remove the vent cover and install the cardboard or insulation into the opening and then put the cover back on.