Keeping Your Conservatory Cool in Summer: A Practical Guide

Why Your Conservatory Overheats and What You Can Do About It

A conservatory can be one of the most pleasant rooms in the house during spring and autumn, but come summer it often turns into an unusable glass box. The sun streams in through the roof and windows, and the heat builds up with nowhere to go. The result is a space that feels like a greenhouse rather than a living area. The good news is that you can make it comfortable again without major building work. This guide walks you through the steps, from the simplest fixes to more effective long-term measures, and explains what to watch out for at each stage.

The main problem is that glass lets in short-wave solar radiation but traps the long-wave heat that radiates off surfaces inside the room. That is the same principle that makes a car heat up on a sunny day. To cool the space down, you need to either block the heat before it enters, vent it out once it is inside, or both. Most successful cooling strategies combine several approaches, and the order in which you tackle them matters.

Start with Reflective Blinds or Shades

The most direct way to reduce heat gain is to stop the sun's rays from hitting the glass in the first place. External blinds or shades are far more effective than internal ones because they block the heat before it passes through the glass. Internal blinds still let the heat in, and the warmth gets trapped between the blind and the window. That said, internal options can still help if external fitting is not practical.

Look for blinds with a reflective backing. The reflective surface bounces the sunlight away rather than absorbing it. Roller blinds, pleated shades, and Venetian blinds all come in reflective versions. For roof windows, which let in the most intense sunlight, a dedicated roof blind is worth considering. The key point is to close them during the hottest part of the day, typically from mid-morning until late afternoon, and open them once the outside temperature drops.

What to watch: cheap blinds can sag or discolour after a season in direct sun. Check that the fabric is UV-stable and that the mechanism is robust enough for daily use. Also, remember that if you rely solely on internal blinds, the glass itself will still heat up and radiate warmth into the room, so you will almost certainly need additional ventilation.

Improve Ventilation to Let Hot Air Escape

Even with blinds, some heat will get in. The next step is to give that heat a way out. Conservatories often have limited opening windows, and the hot air that collects near the roof has nowhere to go. The solution is to create a flow of air: cool air enters low down, warm air exits high up.

If your conservatory has roof windows, open them fully. They are positioned at the highest point, which is where the hottest air gathers. Opening a low window or door at the same time creates a natural convection current. The cool air comes in at the bottom, pushes the warm air up, and the warm air leaves through the roof opening. Even a small gap at the top makes a noticeable difference.

If you do not have roof windows, consider adding a wall-mounted vent near the ceiling or a solar-powered roof vent. These can be fitted without major structural changes. Another option is a door that can be left open, such as a patio door, but then you lose privacy and let in insects. That is where a flyscreen becomes useful, because it lets you leave the door or window open without inviting in flies, wasps, or mosquitoes.

What to watch: simply opening a single window at head height does very little. The warm air stays near the ceiling, and without a low-level inlet and a high-level outlet, the air barely moves. Also, be careful about security. An open ground-floor window or door is an invitation to burglars. Fit locks that allow the window to be secured in a slightly open position, or use a temporary vent restrictor.

Use Flyscreens to Keep Insects Out While Ventilating

This is where the idea of conservatory flyscreens comes into its own. If you want to leave doors and windows open for hours, you need a barrier that keeps insects out without blocking the airflow. Standard mesh screens work well, but they need to be fitted properly so that there are no gaps around the edges. A retractable flyscreen is a neat solution because you can pull it across when the window is open and roll it away when the window is closed, so it does not spoil the view.

For a conservatory, the best approach is to fit flyscreens to the doors and windows that you open most often. The screens should be fine enough to stop small insects such as midges, but not so fine that they restrict the airflow noticeably. A good-quality screen lets air pass through almost as freely as an open window, but keeps out the bugs. If you have a garden room or a pool enclosure attached to the house, the same principle applies: ventilate freely without letting insects in.

What to watch: poorly fitted screens leave gaps at the sides or bottom, which defeat the purpose. Measure the opening carefully and choose a system that seals against the frame. Also, consider how easy the screen is to clean. Dust and pollen can clog the mesh over time, which reduces airflow. A retractable screen that can be taken down and washed is easier to maintain than a fixed one.

When you are looking for a reliable solution, you can find well-designed retractable flyscreens from a supplier such as gozito.co.uk. They offer made-to-measure options that fit the exact dimensions of your doors and windows, which helps avoid the gaps that plague off-the-shelf products. The key, as always, is to measure accurately and choose a mesh that matches the insect pressure in your area.



Add Reflective Film to the Glass

If blinds are not an option, or if you want extra heat rejection, solar control film can be applied directly to the glass. These films reflect a large proportion of the sun's infrared and ultraviolet rays while still letting visible light through. The effect is similar to wearing sunglasses: the room stays brighter than it would be with blinds closed, but the heat gain is dramatically reduced.

Reflective film works best on south- and west-facing windows, which get the most intense sunlight. It is less effective on north-facing panes. The film can be applied to both the glass panes and the roof glazing, but be aware that some types of film can cause the glass to overheat and crack if the glass is not tempered. That is rare with modern double glazing, but it is worth checking with the film manufacturer before you buy.

What to watch: reflective film can change the look of the conservatory from the outside, giving it a mirrored appearance. Some homeowners like that, but others find it too obvious. There are also neutral films that cut heat without the mirror effect, though they are slightly less effective. Another point is that film is semi-permanent: once applied, it is difficult to remove without leaving residue. Make sure you are happy with the appearance before you commit.

Use Plants to Create Shade and Cool the Air

Plants are a natural way to cool the air around a conservatory. They do it through evapotranspiration: water evaporates from the leaves, which cools the surrounding air. A row of tall potted plants placed just outside the conservatory can cast shade on the lower part of the glass, reducing heat gain at ground level. Inside the conservatory, broad-leaved plants such as ferns or spider plants can help, though their effect is modest compared to external shading.

Climbing plants on a trellis outside the conservatory are another option. They create a green screen that blocks sunlight in summer and lets it through in winter when the leaves drop. This works especially well on the south and west sides. Just make sure the plants do not damage the brickwork or the window frames, and keep them trimmed back from the glass so they do not scratch it in the wind.

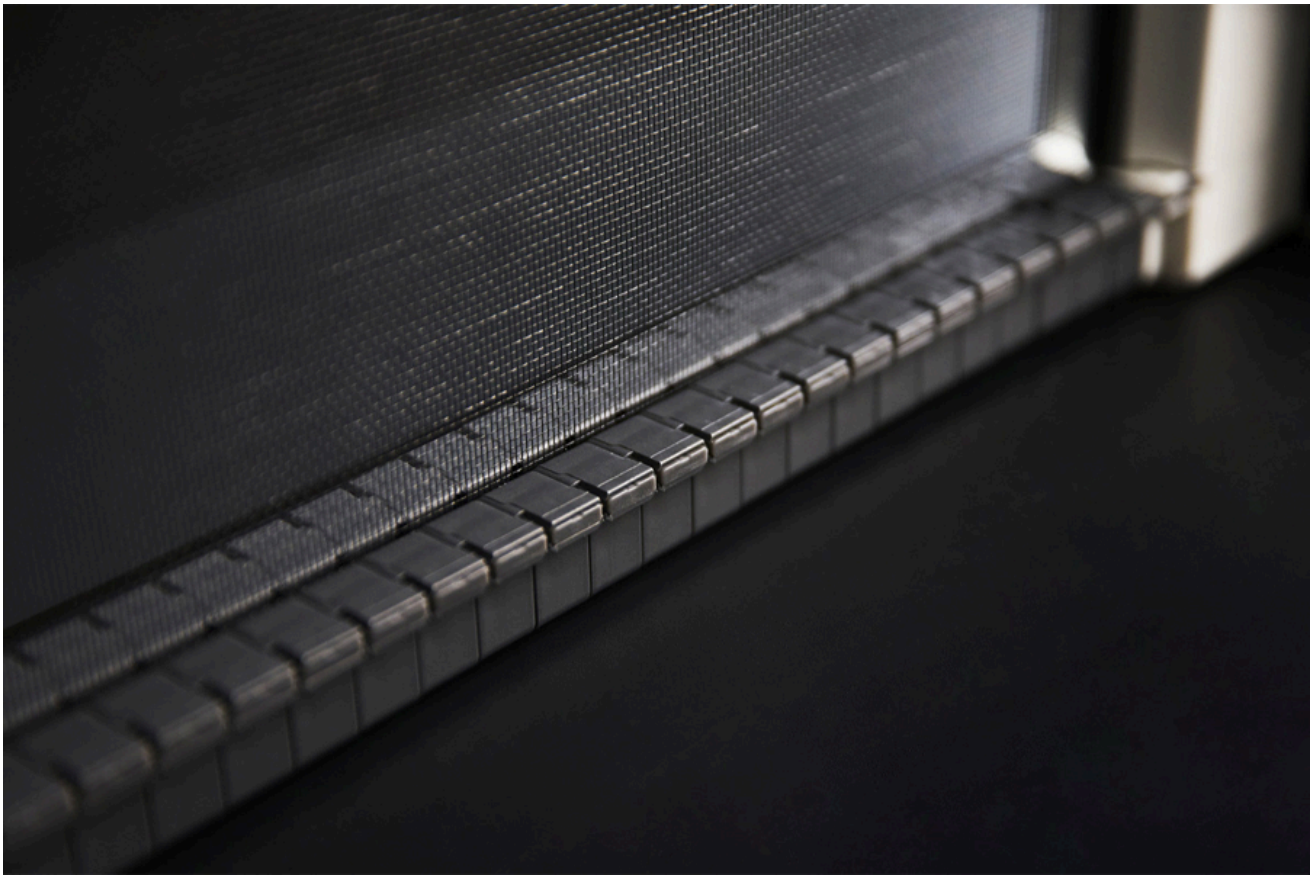
What to watch: plants need water, and a conservatory can get very hot, which dries them out quickly. You will need to water them regularly, possibly every day in a heatwave. Also, outdoor climbing plants can harbour insects that then find their way inside, so you may need to inspect the foliage near the windows. If you keep the plants on the outside, the insect issue is reduced because the flyscreens on your windows will stop most bugs from entering.

Consider a High-Volume Fan or Ceiling Fan

Sometimes natural ventilation is not enough, especially on still, humid days. A fan can help by moving air across your skin, which makes you feel cooler even if the room temperature stays

the same. A ceiling fan is a good choice for a conservatory because it circulates air throughout the room without taking up floor space. If you have a low ceiling, a floor-standing or table fan works too, though it will only move air in one direction.

For maximum effect, position the fan so that it draws cool air from the shaded side of the conservatory and blows it across the seating area. If you have an open door or window on the opposite side, the fan can help pull that cooler air through the room. Some fans are designed to be mounted on a wall or a post, which can be a neat solution in a conservatory where ceiling space is limited.



What to watch: a fan only moves air; it does not cool it. If the air in the conservatory is already hot, a fan will just blow hot air at you. That is why fans work best in combination with good ventilation and shading. Also, consider the noise level. A quiet fan is essential if you plan to use the conservatory for relaxing or working. Look for models that specify the decibel level at each speed setting.

Putting It All Together

No single measure will turn a scorching conservatory into a cool retreat. The most effective approach is to combine external shading, good ventilation, and a barrier against insects so you can leave doors and windows open without being bothered. Start with the cheap and simple

steps: close reflective blinds during the day, open roof windows and a low door or window to create airflow, and fit flyscreens to the openings you use most. If that is not enough, add reflective film to the glass and consider a fan for the stillest days.

Think of it as a system. Each element works with the others, and the order matters. Block the heat first, then vent what remains, then move the air around. The result is a conservatory that stays usable even in the hottest weather, without the need for air conditioning or expensive structural changes. And if you want to make sure the insect barrier is seamless, a made-to-measure retractable flyscreen from a specialist such as gozito.co.uk can be the finishing touch that ties the whole system together.