

ASK THE BUILDER

I have French doors out on to my back patio that faces right into the sun. I want to keep the sun out as well the bugs so I keep the door closed with the shade pulled. Isn't there a better way? I have this beautiful view and I'm not taking advantage of it.

Santa Barbara has some of the best weather as well as spectacular views. I can understand your frustration. However there are a couple of ideas that are somewhat inexpensive. First of all, I know that we don't think much about screens around here but it can create a great solution for your patio. New designs and technology in screens have come along way. They now create screens that can be invisible and disappear completely when not in use. These screens retract into a narrow tubular housing (cassette) vertically on the door frame and then open to a magnet on the other side. A small track is attached horizontally to the floor and to the top of the door opening.

After you open your French doors for ventilation, you then pull the handle on the edge of the screen which is coiled up in the cassette. It unrolls from the cassette and latches on the other side with the magnetic latch. There is slight spring tension on the screen to keep it taut and attractive. They are fairly easy to install. Although if you don't think of yourself as a handy person, you might consider having it installed. They only take about an hour to install. These invisible screens are available for most windows and doors with a tubular housing on the side or top

There are different types of materials that offer sun control as well as insect control like those pesky West Nile mosquitoes. The four most common materials are Fiberglass, Aluminum, Polyester, and Bronze. Newer screens are now designed to stop as much as 65% of the sun's heat and glare..

There are several other advantages and applications for screens or screen like materials. One of the advantages is it can reduce the fading of interior furnishings or textiles. Darker screens can provide a superb view of the outside and absorb light making them ideal for viewing a computer or television screen. Rooms that have several large windows use a type of screening material just to absorb the sunlight or add privacy. Like shades but more transparent Screens can also be used to enclose an open room. This type of screen enclosure can reduce the wind and provide a certain amount of privacy as well as insect control. They can even be motorized to where you close or open up a room with the push of a button. But it can be as basic as screening off the front of a garage.

Another option is to tint your windows. They block out about the same amount of heat and also a whopping 99.9% of the damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays. Newer windows can be ordered with different types of tinting already in the window.

Although for your application I would suggest the invisible screen. The doors can be left open with the screen closed providing great ventilation with a view.