



Even if you get TV by satellite, you'll probably need a terrestrial antenna for receiving local stations in high-definition. Also, if your cable company hasn't yet provided a complete lineup of network stations in high-def, you'll need an antenna to supplement what it does deliver.

For the most part, only old-timers lucky enough to have enjoyed clear, line-of-sight reception from a nearby TV station know that it always gives you the best possible picture. Cable prospered in part because such luck wasn't common. But since broadcast is currently one of the easiest ways to receive HDTV programs, antennas are enjoying a resurgence. Depending on where you live, you might get



ANTENNA BASICS

good results with even an indoor antenna, especially if it's designed for good UHF reception (most digital TV channels are in the UHF band). If you live in an apartment, you may not have any other choice but an indoor antenna. One example is the Zenith Silver Sensor (\$40, shown). But if you live in a house, you'll more likely need a properly aimed directional antenna mounted on the roof or in the attic. Again, UHF performance is likely to be more important than VHF pickup. Terk's TV38 (\$200) is an example of an outdoor digital TV antenna.

A good professional installer should be able to steer you to the right type of antenna for your area. If you're a do-it-yourselfer, a good place to start is antennaweb.org. Enter your address and some other information about where you live, and it'll tell you what stations you should be able to receive, their distances and directions from your home, and the type of antenna

Antenna Selector

This antenna works in the following zone(s).

See the TV Antenna Selector Map to find the zone in which you live.

Go to antennaweb.org for more information.

you need to pull them in. The recommendations are in the form of a color code that's been adopted by antenna manufacturers to help people choose the right models for their needs. It's printed right on the antenna box (see sample at left).

Here are our Top 3 reasons for buying a good antenna: 1) Once you get a decent signal, the picture will be perfect — no ghosts, no interference, no noise. 2) The signal is free. 3) You'll receive more stations.

— Michael Riggs and Michael Antonoff

TRENDS

Since our last count, seven months ago ("HDTV Guide," October 2003), nearly 250 more TV stations in 49 states have begun broadcasting some of their programs in high-definition or are expected to be doing so by May. The biggest spurt in growth has been among PBS stations. Despite some resistance from rural America, most of the nation's broadcasters are well along the path in converting from the old analog system to the new all-digital system. Our map shows that approximately 650 stations are now broadcasting HDTV.

The word from Fox is that its approximately 125 affiliate stations will move to high-def by this fall. Other stragglers promising high-def are WUXP (UPN) 30 and WNAB (WB) 58, both in Nashville, TN, by sometime this fall; WSKG (PBS) 42 in Binghamton, NY, by mid-summer; and KHQ (NBC) 15 in Spokane, WA, before the end of spring. It seems that flowers aren't the only pretty things we can look forward to seeing this season.

— M.A.