

Cooling fermentations

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Tuesday, 15 July 2008 19:33 - Last Updated Tuesday, 15 July 2008 19:34

For both beer and wine fermentations, temperature regulation is important. While for red wines we may encourage relatively hot fermentations, but maintaining temperatures above 70F can begin to contribute to some significant fusel alcohol production in our beers. During the hotter summer months, here are a few ways to cool your fermentations down a few degrees without investing in a refrigerator:

- 1. Bathtub or washbasin: If you have an extra bathtub or laundry washbasin that isn't used frequently, you can fill it with cool water. While the water will come to room temperature pretty quickly, it will help dissipate heat from the fermentation and provide a much more regular fermentation temperature. I would not recommend adding ice unless you have a basin which is not much bigger than your fermenter.
- 2. Wet t-shirt: Place an old t-shirt over your fermenter and place the whole arrangement in a small basin/tray of water. The evaporation of the water will help draw away heat while the t-shirt wicks up water from the tray (it will help to pour a little water over the top of the t-shirt as well). This can be accentuated by blowing a fan across it.
- 3. Temperature expedition: Grab a digital thermometer and walk around your house. Find the coldest area and consider making room for your fermenting friend there.

The final suggestion may be to brew heavier beers in the summer. Light beers don't have the profile to mask off-flavors like a good barleywine or stout may have.