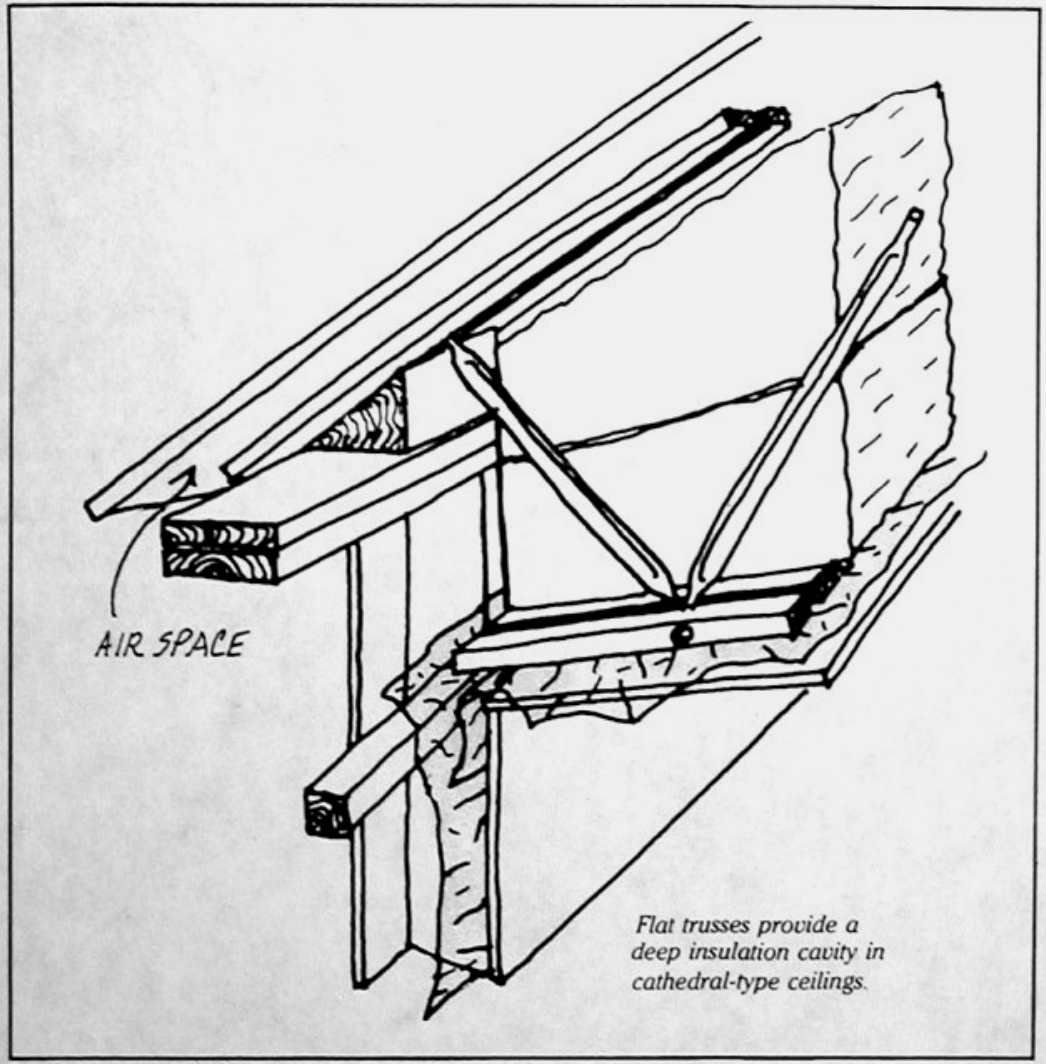

Flat trusses provide a deep insulation cavity in cathedral-type ceilings.

the eaves, causing water to back up and leak into the structure.

A well-vented attic has obvious summer benefits also. By cooling down steamy attic temperatures, heat gain from attic to house is reduced.

Research has shown that the best venting configuration has a continuous soffit combined with continuous ridge vent. This combination is the most independent of wind speed and direction. And it conducts the airflow directly under the roof sheathing, where condensation would be most likely to form in winter.

Some of the earlier ridge vents were reminiscent of chicken coops, but more attractive (i.e., less conspicuous) ones are coming on the market.

How much

Model codes call for the net free vent area in the attic to be 1/300 of the ceiling area if the ceiling has a vapor barrier and 1/150 if it doesn't. Inlet and outlet vents should be of about equal size. These codes were written long ago for looser houses with less attic insulation, so it wouldn't hurt to err on the side of larger vents. Also, these codes are based on winter condensation risks, not summer energy costs. In summer, ventilation/ceiling ratios of 1/100 are recommended by some authorities. If a whole-house fan is planned, that too will need upsized vents.