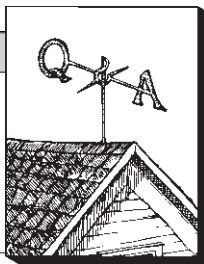


# How to Stain Red Cedar

by Hank Spies



**Q.** *Should red-cedar siding be stained right away or should it weather for a season first to allow the extractives to bleed out? Also, how can I prevent pitch and black mildew from bleeding through the stain, particularly with lighter colors?*

**A.** Cedar siding should be finished soon after application. The first finish probably will not last as long as subsequent refinishing because the wood is not as rough and will not take as heavy a coat of finish. There seems to be a surge of problems with finishing cedar siding. The problems stem from the wood itself, the way the siding is applied, and from the finishes being used.

The smooth finish now put on cedar seems to be causing problems. We have not identified the exact problem, but the surface seems to be harder and smoother, and consequently will not take as much finish, resulting in premature failure. If cedar is to be stained, therefore, it should be applied rough side out.

The problem with extractives is probably related to application, particularly when the siding is applied over the foam plastic sheathing. The daily moisture migration within the siding leaves moisture on the back of the siding, and since the sheathing is non-absorbent, the moisture trickles out, carrying extractives with it. A layer of #15 felt between the sheathing and the siding may help by providing temporary storage for the moisture.

The stains have changed as well. It used to be common practice to have about 3 percent penta in the stain, which helped prevent mildew. This is no longer permitted. Other mildewcides can be added, but they are not as effective as penta. Latex-based stains have virtually no penetration and tend to form a film on the surface of the wood. Multiple applications of the opaque oil stains can also form a surface film. Stains that form films can fail in the same way as paints.

These problems are complex and beyond the scope of this column. The Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wis., has assembled all of the practical information on exterior finishing into one comprehensive non-technical publication. The U.S. Agricultural Handbook 647, entitled *Finishing Wood Exteriors: Selection, Application, and Maintenance*, is available for \$3.25 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 710 N. Capitol Street, Washington, DC, 20402. Ask for Stock Number 001-000-044-50-8.

## Insulation for Flues

**Q.** *What type of loose-fill insulation should be used around stainless steel chimney liners? Should these always be insulated?*

**A.** Vermiculite, perlite, or mica chips are about the only insulating materials that should be used around

the metal liner. Insulating around the liner keeps it warmer and reduces the condensation and creosote formation within the flue.

## Floating Bricks

**Q.** *The new zero-clearance chimneys present a problem when the owner wants us to install a brick chimney—namely how to support a ton of brick in the attic. Any information on acceptable methods would be appreciated.*

**A.** About the only safe way to support the brick in the attic is on a system of steel supports extending to the foundation or to a separate footing. If it is supported on wood, the initial shrinkage and the movement with moisture changes will probably cause the masonry to crack.

## Dipping Shingles

**Q.** *Is there any advantage to pre-dipping white-cedar shingles prior to application? Do the shingles need to be dry when dipped? We are getting them fairly wet nowadays. We usually use a preservative stain such as Cuprinol.*

**A.** Pre-dipping the shingles will contribute to their life on the wall if a preservative stain is used. The drier the shingles, the more they will absorb, and the more effective the treatment will be.

## Corrosion Problems

**Q.** *Do you have any information on the life expectancy of power-driven fasteners versus double-hot-dipped galvanized nails in pressure-treated lumber? Is the pressure-treated lumber corrosive to power-driven nails?*

**A.** There are differences in the nails driven by various power systems. A nail with an electroplated zinc coating is not much more corrosion-resistant than an uncoated nail. A hot-dipped galvanized nail will last considerably longer, but most power drivers cannot use them because they are too rough to go through the machine. A power nailer such as the old USM machine, which fed the nails individually through a flexible tube rather than from a coil or strip, probably could. A double-hot-dipped nail has an even thicker and rougher coating, but tends to eliminate porosity in the zinc.

As for corrosion, wood that has been pressure-treated with a fire-retardant is considerably more corrosive to fasteners. The salts used for preservative purposes have little additional corrosive effect. But since pressure-treated wood is normally used in damp or wet locations, uncoated nails would rust regardless of the type of wood used. ■

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