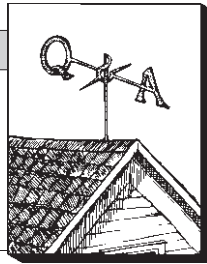


## Why Rough-Side Out?

by Henry Spies



**Q.** I read several times in the June, 1988, issue of NEB that stain will last much longer on the siding with the rough side out. I find this disappointing, since the smooth side is usually more attractive. Why the difference in durability? What exactly does "last longer" mean? Is this true for heavily pigmented as well as semi-transparent stains?

**A.** Basically, the rough side absorbs and holds more stain because there is more surface area, resulting in a thicker coat. In general, heavily pigmented stains provide better protection than lighter stains, and on a rough surface the advantage would probably be even greater. Rough-side finishes "last longer" in terms of color retention and protection of the wood from weathering and solar degradation.

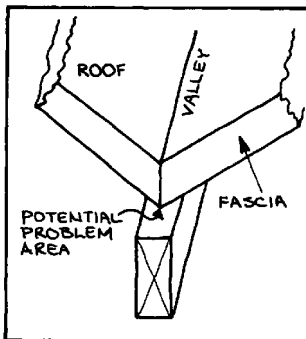
### Cleaning a Wood Subfloor

**Q.** How can I remove asphalt-impregnated felt from a wood subfloor? The felt was used as underlayment beneath asphalt floor tiles. Is sanding the only remedy?

**A.** The felt was probably put down with a water-soluble adhesive, such as linoleum cement. Since the felt tends to be water-resistant, it is difficult to soften the adhesive. Scraping is usually the best solution. If the felt is scored and the floor kept wet for a matter of hours, the adhesive may be softened enough to allow removal. If the new floor is to be tile or sheet goods, the common procedure is to leave the existing tile and install a new 1/4-inch underlayment over it.

### Beam Protection

**Q.** A house we are working on has several beam outriggers, which provide support for a cantilevered roof overhang (see illustration). A roofing contractor suggested that these areas be undermined at the fascia/beam interface to prevent wood rot from developing. Is this a good idea, and should the beam also have a metal cap for added protection?



**A.** I am not familiar with the term "undermined," but I would recommend that the top of the beam be trimmed off so that the fascia could

pass over it without notching. There should be a metal cap or flashing, which is turned up behind the fascia, extends over the top of the beam, and continues down over the end-grain of the beam.

### Stopping Wood Rot

**Q.** Once wood has started to rot, is there any treatment to stop it? Is keeping it dry sufficient? Would a good dousing with Cuprinol do any good on partially rotted wood?

**A.** If the wood can be kept completely dry, it will not continue to rot. However, this is difficult, since the "rot" is really a developed system of channels to feed moisture to the fungi involved. Rotted wood will absorb liquid water and even water from high humidity faster than any other part of the building. Surface application of a wood preservative, such as Cuprinol, will kill the fungus that it reaches. Even though there is a developed channel system in the wood, it may not reach all of the infected cells. That is why pressure-treatment is required to ensure complete penetration.

### Under-Slab Poly Problem

**Q.** I have been told that concrete poured directly on polyethylene film will quickly destroy it and ruin the vapor barrier. Is there a product that will provide an under-slab vapor barrier that won't deteriorate chemically, and is economical?

**A.** Neither we nor the Portland Cement Association have found a chemical action from concrete that will "quickly destroy" polyethylene. Mechanical damage, however, is likely during the placement of concrete, particularly if the poly goes directly over crushed rock. Laminated polyethylene, such as Tu-Tuf, should be more resistant to tearing. Also, a layer of sand over the poly can help protect it.

### Permeable Caulk?

**Q.** Is there such a thing as a vapor-permeable caulk that will stop air infiltration from the exterior, without trapping moisture within the wall cavity?

**A.** Not that I know of. One possible solution is to seal a strip of Tyvek over the area in question. For example, wall cavities have been vented through holes drilled in the top plates, with Tyvek covering the holes. In general, your air-sealing efforts will be better spent on the interior. ■

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