

Fight Mildew as Humidity And Temperature Rises

When you start a home maintenance project, you often find other things that should be done. For example, while cleaning your windows, you notice that there is mildew on the trim and sash and that the fungus has made its way onto your siding. You also know that severe cases of mildew contamination can ruin not only a paint job, but also what's under it. In order to protect your home, you must get rid of that mildew.

First, make sure that the discoloration on your paint is, in fact, mildew-related. To test, apply a few drops of bleach to one of the blotches, wait five minutes and rinse. If the dark color disappears where the bleach was applied, then the spot is likely to be mildew.

To clean the surface thoroughly, scrub it with a solution of mild household detergent to eliminate dirt and other organic material. Then rinse the surface with a garden hose. Wash the surface with a solution of one part bleach to three parts water, then leave the bleach solution on the surface for several minutes to give it sufficient time to kill the mildew. Finally, rinse the surface thoroughly with a garden hose. You should wear protective gloves and goggles to avoid skin and eye irritation.

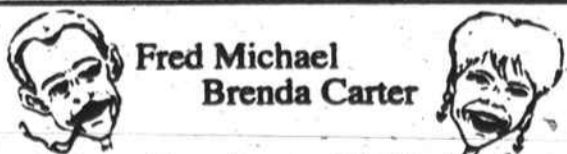
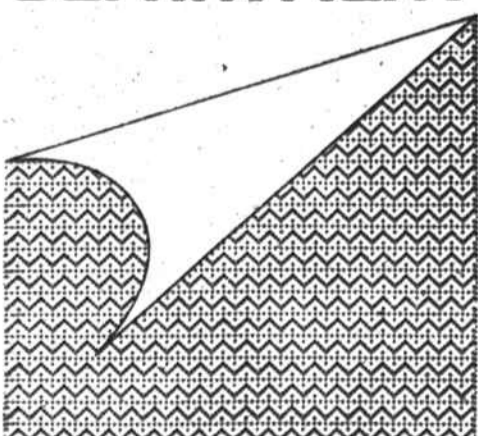
If it's time to repaint your home's exterior and your home is mildew-prone, the Paint Quality Institute recommends that you use a top quality exterior latex coating since latex paints resist mildew

better than oil-based or alkyd paints. They say latex paint works better because it contains fewer nutrients on which the fungi can feed. And the National Association of Home Builders Research Center notes that microscopic pores in the latex paint layers allow water vapor to pass through the dried paint film. This "breathing" ability reduces the likelihood of moisture build-up between the paint and the surface, and therefore deters mildew growth. Also, top quality latex paints give extra protection in the form of higher levels of mildewcide than standard grades of paint.

In addition to choosing the right paint, don't forget to properly prepare the surface you are working on. If you see chalking, peeling or other paint surface problems, you may need to remove all paint layers and start over with a primer, two or three coats of paint and finish the job with a top coat. If the surface under the paint is damaged, you may need to sand it and dust off any remaining particles. If your surface is relatively smooth, choose a good quality primer and paint, clean the surface thoroughly and get to work. Apply the paint in thick films for the best protection against mildew, and use two coats of top quality paint, not just one, for extra protection.

— **Todd Isenhour, President,**
Home Builders Association of
Winston-Salem

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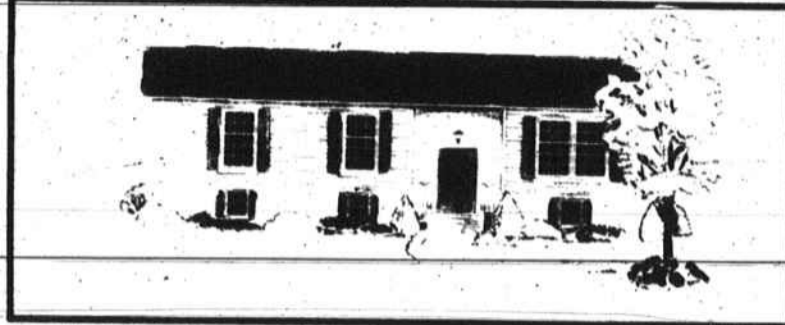


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