

HOW TO MINIMIZE MILDEW

WHEN PLANNING AN EXTERIOR PAINT JOB

Mildew is a black or brown fungus that can grow on, and disfigure exterior surfaces, including paint. While it is not possible to guarantee a 100% mildew-free paint job, especially for a long period of time, there are some precautions that can help significantly in reducing or avoiding mildew growth on a paint job. Take as many of these into account as you can, when planning and doing an exterior paint job.

1. The Environment: while there isn't much you can do about this, keep these points in mind when deciding how much you want to do with factors you can control:

- warm, moist weather, and absence of freezing temperatures fosters mildew growth
- mildew in the area leads to mildew growth (wind-blown spores)
- protected areas are worst; sunlit areas grow mildew less

2. The Surface Being Painted:

- never paint over mildew, remove it first: apply water:household bleach, 3:1, (protect eyes, skin, breathing; wet down plants and/or cover them); leave the bleach solution on the surface for 20-30 minutes; re-apply if it dries; rinse thoroughly
- bare wood, and oil-based paint as the previous paint, are bad for mildew
 - prime these surfaces with quality acrylic latex primer; this includes surfaces scraped down to bare wood or to old oil-based paint

3. The Paint Being Applied:

- latex is better than alkyd and oil-based paint
- satin formulas are generally more mildew resistant than flat paints
- a top quality paint likely has more mildewcide than a lower grade (a mildewcide is an ingredient that resists mildew growth)
- dark colors dry out faster (dew, rain), so tend to support mildew less
- use mildew-resisting additive only if recommended by the paint manufacturer

4. Applying the Paint:

- two coats are better than one; a thick coat is better than a thin one
- avoid painting when breezy, especially if mildew is seen in the area
- paint applied with a sprayer can be better than brushed (brush marks can hold onto nutrients for mildew, and mildew can collect there)