

## STAINING OR PAINTING A HOME

Regular staining or painting maintains the exterior of a home, enhances its appearance, and protects one's investment. If neglected, T-11 siding—for example—is both costly and time-consuming to replace. Regular staining or painting is far easier and cheaper. For those who have never undertaken this task or haven't done so in a long time, the following briefly outlines the materials, surface preparation, and application of stain or paint needed to complete the task efficiently, effectively, and without breaking the budget.

### Materials

- A wire brush (for removing loose or cracked stain or paint and stubborn mildew)
- A stiff nylon brush that screws into a 4-5 ft. handle (for removing surface mildew)
- commercial mildew remover or household bleach (the latter is much cheaper and works as well as most commercial removers)
- a 1 and a 2 in. brush (for small trim) and a 3 or 4 in. brush (for large trim areas such as eaves)
- a couple of 9 in. rolls (for applying paint/stain on large flat exterior surfaces)
- 1 or 2 metal paint pans (for rolling paint/stain in)
- an adjustable steel or aluminum pole that extends to 18-20 ft. (for painting large flat areas quickly and usually without a ladder)
- high-quality primer (if needed—see below)
- high-quality latex paint or stain (Using anything but high-quality paint or stain wastes time, effort, and money because the work won't last very long.) If using stain, purchase a solid color, not a semi-transparent one, because the former maintains its appearance better and longer
- a large drop cloth (4-mil plastic, to cover plants below paint/stain areas)

### Surface Preparation

If there is dust or debris on the house, wash it off with a garden hose or warm sudsy water and a hose.  
Remove loose or cracked stain or paint with a wire brush.  
Eliminate completely all mildew, using an anti-mildew agent or liquid bleach (diluted to 1-2 cups per gallon of water) and a hand held or handle-held nylon brush. (Trying to stain over mildew wastes time, money, and stain because the mildew will inevitably "bleed" through to the surface.)  
If in removing mildew or loose stain or paint you expose underlying wood, paint the exposed areas with a high-quality primer and let dry.

### Application of stain or paint

Make sure exterior surfaces are dry before applying stain or paint.  
Lay down a drop-cloth under the surfaces to be painted or stained.  
With a 1 or 2 in. brush, apply stain or paint first in all the grooves or seams of the wood siding. (This concerns T-11 siding especially.)  
With a 9 in. roller screwed tightly into a steel or aluminum pole, stain or paint the large flat areas of the house.  
Thoroughly cover the siding and let dry.  
If it has been a long time since the house was stained, another coat will probably be necessary because the first one will have sunk into the siding and not look even and well finished. (Fortunately, working with a roller goes very fast.)  
For hard-to-reach areas up high, a ladder may be needed.  
The small and large trim is best painted or stained with brushes, ranging from 1 to 4 in. Start at the high parts of the house (the eaves) and work down to the lower windows.  
Clean-up after applying latex stain or paint is easy. Just use enough cold water until the brushes and rollers no longer drip any color.  
To save the paint or stain on a saturated roller, just hold the roller in one hand above an open can and, with a dull flat object (a putty knife or screw-driver), scrap the sides of the roller downward toward the open can. You'll be amazed at how much paint or stain you can save.

Once a home is painted or stained well, its eye-appealing appearance can be maintained for a long time easily by painting or staining a couple sides of the home with the same color every two to three years. By doing so on a regular basis, there will be little or no mildew and little or no preparation time. Neglect can cost well over \$10,000 in siding replacement costs. It's much more beneficial to maintain and protect your investment.

Submitted by a caring and great neighbor in our community!

Remember safety precautions when working with bleach. Items such as gloves, eye protection, and plenty of fresh air are important. Always read the safety directions on what ever product you use. Don't forget to protect your plants from any spills of paint or bleach.