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Cleaning your Wood Fence and Decks – Yearly Maintenance

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Annual exterior wood cleaning and maintenance will protect your investment. You must get it professionally cleaned once a year.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Do clean the exterior wood thoroughly once a year.

Summary of different types of methods for clean exterior wooding

How to Wash the exterior wood

Dos and Don'ts of Wood Maintenance

Final Words

Trust the exterior wood Staining Professionals in Orlando, FL.

FAQ

Exterior wooding on your home is a great way to add a little bit of character and style. It's also an easy way to make the most of those beautiful summer days. Usually, wood exterior wooding can last between 15 to 30 years on average. However, with the proper care and maintenance, your exterior wooding can last for decades, rain or harsh sunshine.

It's a good idea to create a routine of upkeep for exterior woods because they are exposed to the elements all year round. This way, you can protect and preserve your wood and prevent expensive repairs later on.

Do clean the exterior wood thoroughly once a year.

If you want your exterior wood to look its best and last as long as possible, you need to clean it at least once a year thoroughly. Also, your wood requires an annual exfoliation to ensure that protective sealants can penetrate deeper into the wood.

Why? Because the longer you wait, the more likely it is that dirt and grime will build up on the surface of your wood, which can lead to discoloration and decay. If you don't clean it, your wood will show signs of wear more quickly and require more maintenance than it would if you took care of it right away!

Summary of different types of methods for clean exterior wooding

- If you've got a little time, there's no reason not to do some DIY on your exterior wooding. Begin with the cleaning, as it can make a huge difference in how the final product looks.
- This can be done using a quick and easy chemical formula, eliminating the elbow grease and extra physical effort. But these cleaning solutions can cause damage to plants and other surrounding things if not handled properly. Therefore, proper instructions should be followed, and it's also necessary to cover the surrounding plants with plastic protection.

- Another efficient but tricky method, an alternative to chemicals, is a pressure wash, stiff wire brush, and elbow grease, which might be sufficient for the accumulated dirt. We don't recommend this method for moldy areas as it could worsen the problem. It is essential that you first treat and clean mold.
- Apply the appropriate exterior wood-cleaning product with a sprayer or roller to kill bacteria and mold when the wood is dry and the weather is moderately warm, between 60 to 70 °F.
- You can either use a utility brush to clean exterior wood that is particularly dirty or, when mold is present, precisely all the residues. This process consumes a little extra time but is safer than a power washer. On the other hand, using any garden hose equipped with a hard-stream setting nozzle will also work. A "fireman" type nozzle can be found at auto-parts shops and delivers a powerful spray, saving the first-timer from risks associated with power washers. Mildew could be lurking. In this case, power washers and pressure washers can be the fastest way to eliminate mold.

Please continue reading to know more details about the simple exterior wood maintenance schedule to keep it safe, sound, and looking great all year round.

How to Wash the exterior wood

Unwashed exterior wood can lead to mildew and mold, leading to rot. Here are some steps to clean exterior wood.

1. Thoroughly sweep the exterior wood.

Give your wooden exterior a good, thorough sweep. Carefully sweep the entire surface of your exterior wood, including corners and edges. This will help you

determine if anything is hiding in the cracks that could be causing issues later with chemical penetration.

Use a putty knife to remove debris between exterior wood boards for decks. Be sure to pay attention to areas where exterior panels cross the Joists, which are the structural members beneath the outer wooding.

TIP: To make a quick extension, push the handle of your putty knives into a 1 1/4-inch length of PVC pipe. Some putty knife handles can be squeezed right in, believe us, that can be a real knee-saver, or you can buy a long handle stiff brush for scrubbing in case you are cleaning your deck.

or

If you prefer to clean with a pressure washer, make sure it is done in cooler, less windy conditions and when your surface is not directly exposed to the sun. This will ensure the cleaner doesn't dry on your surface, and then rinse it. It also means that the spray won't blow in your face.

2. Protect Yourself and Surroundings

Protect your surrounding area where you are working. Cover your plants and grass with the cleaning solution by covering them with plastic sheets and wet them. Wear protective gear to save yourself from chemicals.

3. Choose an appropriate cleanser.

Follow the directions on a standard exterior wood cleaner. Some exterior woods require to be wet, and some don't. Some cleaners are not suitable for composite materials. Use a commercial detergent and degreaser to remove oil and grease stains.

Multi-purpose exterior wood cleaning cleaners can remove mold from exterior wood. This is a fast way to quickly solve multiple problems and make your exterior wood look new.

4. Apply the exterior wooding cleaner

Choose a cloudy day so the cleaner doesn't evaporate, and the exterior wood is still cool.

Always read the instructions. To apply the cleaner, use a paint roller or a garden sprayer. It should not pool. Don't let the exterior wood dry until you've scrubbed it clean. Let it sit for about 5-10 minutes according to the manufacturer's instructions. For best results, rinse thoroughly with clean water. To wash the solution off, use a pressure washer. If you don't own a pressure washer, continue scrubbing the area and then use a hose to wash it off.

TIP: Start from the bottom and work your way up. Apply the cleaner, scrub, then rinse. A top-down approach can splatter the cleaning solution and cause the cleaner to double-bleach the wood, leaving marks that won't disappear when the lower part of the wood is washed. You will work from the bottom up, splattering the cleaner onto a damp surface. Hence, the cleaner will not leave any marks.

5. Using a pressure washer to rinse off the chemical

- If you choose to clean your wood using only a pressure washer, you still need to protect yourself and the surrounding area to make sure nothing gets damaged.
- To ensure that the pressure washer doesn't cause damage to the exterior wooding, test on a hidden area first.
- To evenly distribute water pressure, use a wide nozzle.
- Hold the pressure washer at a distance of half a meter (two ft) from the exterior wood. The nozzle should be held at an angle so it can move

closer to the wood. However, no closer than 15–30 cm as it is too close to cause damage.

- Start at the end of your exterior wood, and move the nozzle along the wood grain. To ease the impact of pressure, ensure that the nozzle moves back and forth.
- To get rid of stubborn areas, you might have to continue scrubbing the area with a wire brush.
- *If you have mold on your exterior wood, you have to treat and remove this first. Using a pressure washer runs the risk of spreading the spores and making them worse. Always treat mold first!*
- *Note: You must treat any mold that has formed on exterior wood. The risk of spreading mold spores by using a pressure washer is high. Make sure to treat decay first!*

6. Allow your wood to dry. Wait two days before sealing or staining.

Dos and Don'ts of Wood Maintenance

Avoid cleaning the exterior wood with chlorine bleach.

Unless you don't mind removing the wood's natural color and causing damage to its cellular structure, oxygen bleach can be used for all purposes and won't harm plants or wash out colors, and it is not suitable for redwood.

Avoid using paint as a sealant.

Although paint looks great when applied initially, it can quickly become shabby. You will have to strip or sand the exterior wood if you decide to refinish it with another sealant. Finishes that leave a film on the wood rather than penetrate it—including varnishes or lacquer—will cause it to crack and peel. Synthetic sealants are a good option as oil-based products attract mildew or algae. Semi-transparent finishes protect exterior wood from the sun and can add color if you feel it's necessary.

Don't assume that pressure-treated wood is maintenance-free.

Your deck or fence can remain in pristine condition in the long run.

Although it might be resistant to rot and insect infestations, pressure-treated wood must be sealed and cleaned to withstand solar and water damage. Use products that are made for pressure-treated wood.

Final Words

Cleaning your Dock, Deck and Fence is a crucial part of maintaining the beauty and functionality of your property. It also plays a significant role in preventing costly repairs from occurring. Use the directions mentioned below to deep clean your dock, deck, and fence at least once a year.

If you're interested in more ways to keep your wood looking its best, check out our blog post on staining your deck and fence. (ADD LINKS)

Trust the exterior wood Staining Professionals in Orlando, FL.

When caring for your home, it's crucial not to forget your exterior wood. An excellent curb appeal affects the overall value of your home. Rejuvenating your wood exterior with stain is a quick and easy exterior wood maintenance solution that costs much less than replacements.

Do you want to keep your house looking its best for years to come? At Precision Staining, we can help you maintain your home's exterior wood. We offer annual exterior wood cleaning and maintenance to forestall repairs and protect your investment. We have professionals who will do all the hard work for you and use only the best staining products to bring your wood exterior wood back to life.

FAQ

How Often Should You Stain Your exterior wood?

Many factors will determine how often exterior wood needs to be stained. The type of stain you choose can make a big difference. Transparent stain offers less protection. You will need to stain exterior wood each year.

Semi-transparent stain is a better choice if you need to provide a more substantial barrier. This stain protects your exterior wood from the elements, gives it a natural color, and allows the natural grain to show through. The semi-transparent stain should be reapplied every 2 to 3 years.

Solid stain is the best choice for exterior wood that provides the most outstanding protection, but it can take away the wood's natural beauty. Exterior wood treated with solid stain should be reapplied every five years.

How to choose an exterior wood cleaner

There are hundreds of cleaners available. Shop around and check out the type of wood you have for your exterior wooding. We recommend using only a trusted brand. Our cleaner of choice is the [Simple Green Oxy Solve Deck and Fence Pressure Washer Cleaner](#). This exterior wooding cleaner is powerful and specifically designed to thoroughly remove dirt, grease, algae, and mold before applying any new treatment. This exterior wooding cleaner is potent and can remove all dirt, oil, algae, and mold before using any other treatment.

Reference:

<https://www.ppgpaints.com/pro/training-videos/how-to-clean-prep-and-coat-wooden-exterior-woods-and-fence>