

A GOOD REASON TO SHOP LOCAL



When asked to name our favorite restaurant, cafe, or shop, we almost always cite a unique local business (look at the results in our Readers' Choice as proof). We embrace the idea of distinctive businesses with local character, but often forget their survival depends on our patronage. It is easy for us to get so consumed by efficiency that we forget how much of our lives we spend eating out, shopping, and doing other business. We owe it to ourselves to consider the quality of our experience, and ask if we benefit when we choose a community-based business. Local owners with much of their life savings invested in their businesses have a natural interest in the long-term health of the community. Community-based businesses are essential to charitable endeavors, frequently serving on local boards, and supporting a variety of causes. Yes, there are some corporate chains that give back to towns in which they do business, but anyone who raises funds for local non-profits will tell you that independents are their base of support. So... support your neighbors... support our community, shop smart... shop our local stores!

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Protecting your deck against old man winter

As the heat of the summer winds down to eventually give way to fall rains, it's now the perfect time to start thinking about applying a stain to your deck to protect it against the oncoming punishment of our harsh Canadian winter.

Contrary to what many homeowners currently believe, experts say the late summer or early fall is the best time to apply a protective stain to your deck.

According to Philip Caron, technical trainer at Sico Paints, the late summer or fall is the ideal time for a stain application of your wood surfaces. "A lot of people are not aware that the spring is not the best time to apply stain to wood surfaces such as a wood deck," says Caron. "You have to give your surfaces the time to properly dry and recover from the excess humidity left by the ice and snow."

So to rejuvenate and protect your deck for this winter season, take advantage of a beautiful sunny fall afternoon and try these following helpful tips to give your deck a face-lift.

Surface preparation

"The ultimate fine finish and durability of your staining project begins with the proper preparation of the surface," explains Caron.

For wood that requires routine maintenance

The first step is to clean the surface with an exterior wood restorer such as Formula 22, to eliminate loose grey wood fibres and stains caused by mildew, dust and moss. Let the solution work for about 15 minutes. Rinse the surface with a pressurized clean water jet. Let the surface dry for 2-3 dry sunny days. Sand the surface to remove any residue. If the wood is new it must be sanded to eliminate glazing from the planing process during manufacturing.

For wood that requires stripping beforehand

For wood previously stained, painted or varnished, strip the stained surface with the exterior remover Polyprep or Formula 44, a softer acting stripper especially formulated for exterior wood surfaces with stains that are deteriorating and already peeling. Rinse, then let dry and sand the surfaces. It is important to use 80 grade sandpaper as any grade lower will lead to poor results.

Staining

Sico's alkyd translucent exterior wood stain will take care of almost any and all of your exterior wood care needs. This stain is a beautifully effective product for several exterior applications.

"Gone are the days of buying different products to stain your shutters, balconies, decks and fences," says Caron. The multi-surface stain allows do-it-yourselfers the ability to complete almost all of their exterior wood staining projects simply and efficiently with one product.

Caron says the translucency of the stain's finish creates a very "trendy wet look" and highlights the beauty of the wood grain. "It adds unparalleled richness and depth to exterior wood, including popular and rich grains such as Cedar and Sequoia."

The stain, which is offered in 24 exquisite wood colours, also provides superior durability. "The specialty selected alkyd resins formula creates a water resistant micro-porous film that provides unequalled protection against weather and UV rays and makes it exceptionally resistant to cracking, peeling and fading," he explained. More information on exterior wood staining is available at www.sico.ca.

—News Canada

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