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paint insights



Spruce Up this Spring A Primer on Exterior Painting

Many homeowners are planning spring home improvement projects and often at the top of the list is exterior painting. To achieve picture perfect results from your exterior paint job, follow these four simple and economical steps.

So, when tackling your next exterior paint project, follow these steps and you'll achieve that long-lasting and attractive paint job you planned.

Happy Painting,

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1. Prepare the Surface.

Before you begin painting, make sure the surface is clean and sound. Even the best quality paints will fail if they are applied to a poorly prepared surface. First, remove any mildew with a solution of one part bleach to three parts water then rinse with clean water. Wear eye and skin protection, and protect nearby plantings.

Next, make sure the surface is free of any loose, flaking or peeling paint. This may require scraping and sanding. Also, sand any glossy areas to dull them. Power wash the entire surface to remove dirt and chalk, rinse with clean water.

Finally, prime any bare areas with a top quality exterior primer.



2. Use the Right Tools and Brushes.

Good quality rollers and brushes last longer and help a job move along more quickly. They also apply the paint more heavily and smoothly, which helps with long-term durability. Choose brushes that are well balanced, and have tightly packed bristles that are tapered up to the center of the brush.



3. Paint in the Right Weather Conditions.

Ideally, you should paint when the temperature is between 60-85 degrees F, and when there is little or no wind. Avoid painting in direct sunshine, as this can cause the paint to dry too quickly and even to blister. In addition, if the temperature is predicted to drop below the paint manufacturer's recommendation for minimum application temperature in the next day or two, you might want to consider postponing your project.



4. Use the Right Paint for the Job.

Choose a paint that is designed for the job you're doing. In most cases, a 100% acrylic latex paint will be the best choice. These paints adhere better, are more flexible, and last longer than ordinary paints. Using a lower quality paint just to save a few dollars will end up costing you more in the long run, as you will have to repaint much sooner than if you used a top quality product.

One very important thing to remember is never to use an interior paint for an exterior job. Manufacturers formulate paints for use either inside or out. Paints contain specific ingredients that all play a role in the durability and final appearance. These ingredients include pigments, binders, additives and the carrier or liquid portion.

The pigments provide the whiteness, darkness and color to the paint or other coating. In addition, they impart the opacity and hiding power required. Pigments are dry powders (not dyes); liquid colorants used in the stores contain pigment powders dispersed in a liquid.

The binder is the component that “binds”, or ties together the particles of pigment, hopefully in a tough, durable film. The binder also provides the adhesion of the film, and influences almost all paint properties. Generally, the binder alone dries to a clear, glossy usually colorless film.

Additives are low-level ingredients included in the paint formulation, and put in the product in the factory, not point of sale additives that are purchased in the paint store, home center or other outlets. These affect certain properties such as thickness of the paint, mildew resistance and bubble breaking.

The liquid proportion is water and affects how heavily the paint will tend to apply, and how thick the paint film will be when it dries. This is an important aspect of the overall quality of the product.

How thick the dry film is will affect many of the paint's durability and appearance properties including:

- crack resistance
- hiding
- sheen uniformity
- ease of touch-up
- mildew resistance

Finally, it is important to apply the paint at its recommended spread rate; and not to thin the paint with additional liquid because this reduces the solids content and can compromise quality and performance.