

Finishing Guide

Redwood is one of nature's most maintenance-free building materials. It possesses natural resistance to termites and decay. It also outperforms other wood species because it shrinks and swells less and is therefore less likely to warp, cup, and check. In addition, no other wood takes and holds finishes better than redwood.

Finish Restoration

Mildew

Mildew may appear as dark or gray spots on the wood surface. To remove a mild case of mildew, scrub with a mild cleanser or detergent. Next rinse with a household bleach to kill surviving spores. Lastly rinse with water.

For severe mildew infestations, scrub with a stiff bristle brush using a solution of one cup trisodium phosphate (TSP), one cup liquid bleach and one gallon warm water. Rinse thoroughly. If necessary, follow with an application of 4 ounces oxalic acid crystals dissolved in one gallon warm water in a non-metallic container. Apply evenly with a soft brush. When wood dries, rinse with water.

Color Restoration

Discoloration may occur when extractives are dissolved in water and leach from the wood. To remove extractive stains and to restore a new appearance to weathered wood, scrub wood with a bristle brush and a solution of one cup TSP, one cup bleach to a gallon of water. Next apply a solution of 4 ounces oxalic acid crystals dissolved in one gallon warm water. When wood dries, rinse with water.

General Finishing Tips

- Surfaces should be clean and dry. New structures built with unseasoned wood should air-dry one month before finishing.
- Moisture is the most common cause of finish failures, so use proper vapor barriers, air vents and flashing in new construction.
- Apply finishes on windless days. Ideal temperature range is between 50 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Use finishes recommended for wood exteriors.
- Carefully follow manufacturers' directions.
- To avoid nail stains, use stainless steel, aluminum or top quality, hot-dipped galvanized nails.
- Back-priming is recommended for all exterior finishes, particularly paints.
- Do not use wire brushes or steel wool as metal particles may become embedded in the wood and can cause stains. Use stiff bristle brushes.
- Do not mix incompatible materials or apply them over one another. Finish failures may result.
- Periodic rinsing with a garden hose will remove dirt and grime. Stubborn build-up can be removed by scrubbing with a bristle brush and a solution of warm water and a mild detergent. Rinse afterward. To rejuvenate and restore redwood color, apply oxalic acid according to manufacturer's directions.



Finish Description Effect**Application****Maintenance****Clear Water Repellent with Mildewcide**

Clear finishes that modify weathering characteristics and let color and grain show through.

Minimize weather and mildew attack. Helps eliminate redwood's natural darkening. Areas exposed to direct sun and rain may eventually bleach to gray.

Apply with brush or roller. Two coats recommended for new wood. For best results, coat cut ends, backs and edges before nailing in place.

Reapplication required after old finish has lost effectiveness. Reapply every 12–18 months depending on climate and old finish retention.

**Bleaching or Weathering Stains**

Low maintenance, natural appearance with a gray-toned finish.

Provide for low maintenance and give a uniformly gray or naturally weathered look.

Apply with brush or roller. Use one or two coats according to manufacturer's directions. Bleaching is aided by sunlight and moisture.

Bleaching oils and stains provide nearly maintenance-free performance. Reapply finish only if wood begins to darken or bleaching is uneven. One refinish coat should be enough.

**Semitransparent Stains**

Penetrating finishes available in a variety of semitransparent colors including redwood hues. Oil-based stains recommended.

Provide color in a finish that lets wood breathe naturally; allows the wood grain to show through but presents a uniform single color.

Apply with brush for best results, next best is a roller. Avoid drips and lap marks. Use one or two coats according to manufacturer's directions.

Refinishing may be necessary every 3–5 years. Color may wear away gradually with weathering. One refinish coat is usually enough.

**Solid Body Stains**

Film forming finishes available in a wide variety of opaque colors. Oil-based stains are recommended.

Provide color in a finish that lets wood breathe naturally. Opaque stains will obscure the grain but highlight the texture and have an appearance more like paint.

For best results use a brush. The next best applicator is a roller. Avoid drips and lap marks. Use one or two coats according to manufacturer's directions.

Refinishing may be necessary every 3–5 years. Color may wear away gradually with weathering. One refinish coat is usually enough.

**Paints**

Durable, attractive finishes for traditional exteriors. Quality paints are generally worth the extra cost.

Provide attractive colorful finishes which obscure grain and texture of the wood.

Apply with brush for best results, roller is next best applicator. One prime coat and two top coats are recommended for new wood. Back-priming is highly recommended.

Refinishing may be necessary every 7–10 years. Sand or scrub with stiff bristle brush. Paint and varnish removers may also be used. If sanding, countersink nail heads to protect coating.

