



Things to Consider When Choosing a Natural Wood Stain or Paint

The following considerations are offered to alert and to educate homeowners and service contractors as to the likely plight of natural wood. This applies to all types of exterior natural wood surfaces, including siding, decks, fences, etc. Here are some key considerations when choosing a product or process.

1. How quickly will the product turn black?

- **Consider the effects of a plant oil based product and its propensity to mold or mildew (turn black).**

Key Considerations: It depends on several factors, the primary one being that many plant oil based products such as tung, linseed and Rosewood oils are inherently the food source for microscopic mold and mildew growth. Although, many products contain mildewcides or inhibitors, in the “real world”, these inhibitors weather their way out of the product leaving the remnants of the plant oil feed the mold and mildew spores resulting in the darkening or blackening of surfaces that are moist and shaded enough to support mold and mildew growth. Most manufacturers of plant-based products suggest repeat applications before the mold and mildew sets in. Again our “real world” experience is that it only postpones the inevitable.

- **Consider whether or not by using the product you can keep your wood looking as good as it started out.**

Key Considerations: Why is it so hard to have natural wood stay looking new? There are several reasons that it is difficult to maintain a pleasing natural wood surface. Primarily, it is the very fact that a natural wood appearance means that it is not masked or covered up by a top coating. The “real world” fact of the matter is that anything that is put on the wood to protect or color it is essentially a top coating. So layering one top coat on another top coat creates unique circumstances and particularly unfavorable to the appearance and protection needs of the wood. Because putting multiple coats of a product on a wood surface is not the same as putting that coating directly on bare wood, it causes many problems functionally and aesthetically. There is an irony that exists in the Natural Wood Coatings category of protectants and that is this: The better the product is, the more irreversible the negative effects will be. By saying this, it holds true that the poor performing products make it easier to restore the wood surface to its original condition. And conversely, the best performing products create a maintenance nightmare because, either way, you have to strip the old product off the surface to get it to look and act like it did the first time. It is very difficult and sometimes impossible to remove a durable, well-adhered product. So, the dilemma becomes this; Do I use a poor product, because at least I know I can redo it and have it look decent but it won't really protect my wood? OR, Do I use what is supposed to be a good product and get roped into a very difficult and very expensive maintenance issue that may protect my wood but looks terrible? Using the WoodCare Professional Series from Boodge Company might be the smartest solution to this dilemma.

2. What methods of stripping might be necessary?

Answer: power washing, sanding, planing, and sand blasting, soda blasting

Key Considerations:

- A. How effective are these methods?
- B. Does it have to be sanded?
- C. Does it need pressure washing?
- D. Does it need pressure washing and sanding?



- Consider the effects of multiple applications of the product.
 - A. What will it look like?
 - B. Will it look like new?
 - C. Does the manufacturer NOT recommend layering or double coating?
 - D. Is sanding out of the question because the surface is rough?
 - E. What might pressure washing do to the surface? Is this acceptable?
- Can I continue to re-use this product and expect it to look the same each time?
- Am I willing to accept the possibility that I might NOT be able to keep my wood natural?
- What are the effects of a water-based stain versus an oil- based stain?
- Can I do this myself?
- How often does it need to be done?
- Look at examples of products having been on for 2- 5 years?
- What is the sheen of the product?
 1. Does the sheen stay the same?
 2. Will the sheen be difficult to keep the same?
 3. What will happen to the sheen in direct sunlight exposed areas?
- What happens to the color over time?
- Do I need protection primarily against the sun?
- Do I need protection primarily against water?
- Is my #1 concern aesthetics or function (protection of the wood)?
- How do I know if my wood is protected?
- Does my wood have severe exposure to sun, shade, water, etc.?
- Are some products better in some areas than others?

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