

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Division

THOMAS P. COOPER, Dean and Director

CIRCULAR NO. 241

PAINTING THE EXTERIOR OF THE HOUSE



Lexington, Ky.

December, 1930

Published in connection with the Agricultural Extension work carried on by cooperation of the College of Agriculture, University of Kentucky, with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and distributed in furtherance of the work provided for in the Act of Congress of May 8, 1914.

ap
we
no
wh
th
its
ho
ha

di
an
ag
ch
fa
of
te
w
w
th
la
an
ro

w
ro
pr

CIRCULAR NO. 241

Painting The Exterior of the House

By IDA C. HAGMAN

A new coat of paint or whitewash adds greatly to the appearance of buildings and helps to preserve them from the weather and from decay. A clean, tastefully decorated house not only gives pleasure to those who live in it as well as those who observe it, but is an asset to the owners because it increases the value of their property, and to the community because of its attractive, thrifty appearance. The shabby or unfinished house is a source of embarrassment to those who live in it and has a tendency to lower the morale of the occupants.

PAINTING

There is no cheaper way to keep buildings in good condition than painting. It is not age that makes the roof leak and the porch floor and steps decay; it is lack of protection against the weather and fungi growth. Warmth combined with changeable moisture conditions is the most important factor favoring decay in wood. Moisture enters the pores of the wood of the unpainted house, or the house that is imperfectly protected from the weather causing the wood to swell, and shrink when the moisture has evaporated. The swelling and shrinking weakens the fibers of the wood. The first indication of wear is the roughening of the wood. Then small fissures appear and later cupping, warping, or twisting. Wood destroying bacteria and fungi enter the openings thus made and cause the wood to rot.

All exterior metal parts of buildings made of materials which are subject to corrosion such as gutters, downspouts, tin roofs, flashings and exterior hardware should be covered with a protective coating of paint.

The frequency of painting wooden structures depends upon the nature of the wood, the quality of the paint, and the skill of the painter. Many people in Kentucky think it advisable to repaint every three to five years. Tin roofs usually need painting every two years, depending upon the kind of paint used.

Paint may be purchased ready-mixed or it may be mixed at home. Directions for mixing paint, for preparing surfaces, and for applying the paint are given in Farmer's Bulletin 1452, "Painting on the Farm." Good workmanship and reliable paints are necessary for permanent results. If directions are carefully followed, the inexperienced painter, with a little practice, can do a very creditable job.

WHITEWASHING

Whitewash will brighten dingy buildings. It has the advantage of being cheap and easy to apply, tho it does not have as much permanency or protective value as paint. However, it greatly improves unfinished barns, poultry houses, garages, etc., and is frequently used on frame and brick dwellings. A whitewashed house, farm buildings, and fences, in a setting of green grass, trees, shrubs, and colorful flowers, make a pretty picture which may be duplicated with comparatively little labor and money.

RECIPES FOR MAKING WHITEWASH

*Common Whitewash.** In a clean wooden pail, keg or barrel, slake fresh quick-lime of good quality by adding clean water a little at a time. Slaking may be hastened by breaking up some of the lumps of lime or by adding a little hot water. When slaking is well started, add more water gradually to replace that lost in the slaking process. If not enough water is used the lime will become "scorched," and some of it will be granular. On the other hand, too much water may retard or "quench" the slaking process. After the lime is completely slaked, add enough water to make a thick paste, cover the con-

*From Farmer's Bulletin 1452, "Painting on the Farm."

tainer with boards to keep in the heat, and let it stand for several hours or over night. Then strain the paste thru wire fly screen and thin it to brushing consistency with clean water. Whitewash can be more easily prepared by adding water to hydrated lime that has been well protected from the air. Hydrated lime, however, is not always available.

*Special Whitewashes**

One ounce of alum to each gallon of whitewash increases its adhesion.

One pint of molasses added to 5 gallons of whitewash increases the penetration on wood and plaster.

Whitewash can be made fire resistant by adding 1 part of water glass (35 degrees Baume) to 10 parts of whitewash.

A gloss similar to that of oil paint can be obtained by adding 1 pound of cheap bar soap dissolved in 1 gallon of boiling water to every 5 gallons of whitewash.

Weather-proof whitewash made according to either of the following Government formulas has greater wearing qualities than common whitewash.

1. Slake one-half bushel of quicklime with boiling water. Keep it covered during the process. Strain, and add 1 peck of salt dissolved in warm water. Boil 3 pounds of ground rice in water to a thin paste. Dissolve in warm water one-half pound of Spanish whiting and 1 pound of clear glue. Mix these well together and let the mixture stand for several days. Keep the wash thus prepared in a kettle or portable furnace and when it is to be used put it on as hot as possible with a brush.

2. Lighthouse whitewash

- (1) 62 pounds (1 bushel) of quicklime; slake with 12 gallons of hot water.
- (2) 12 pounds of rock salt; dissolve in 6 gallons of water.
- (3) 6 pounds of Portland cement.
- (4) Pour (2) into (1) and then add (3).

*From Kentucky Circular No. 128, "Building Plans for the Dairy Farm."

TO COLOR WHITEWASH*

For cream, add 4 to 6 pounds of ochre to each bushel of lime.

For buff, add 6 to 8 pounds of raw umber and three or four pounds of lampblack.

For brown, add 6 to 8 pounds of umber, 2 pounds of lampblack, and 2 pounds of Indian red.

HOW TO APPLY WHITEWASH

Before a fresh coat of whitewash is applied the wall should be free from dust, cobwebs, and scaly materials. Stiff wire or bristle brushes are useful in preparing the surface. Whitewash penetrates the cracks and rough splintered surfaces more effectively and covers large areas more quickly when applied by spraying than when applied with a brush. If a sprayer is used, strain the whitewash thru a double thickness of cheesecloth to prevent the nozzle from clogging or sending out an uneven stream, resulting in irregular work.

A four-inch brush is easy to handle. Apply the whitewash freely and rapidly with little pressure and do not "brush out" as in painting. Care must be taken not to have the mixture too thick. If too thick, the whitewash tends to flake off. Experimenting may be required to get the right consistency. Two coats of a thin mixture are better than one of a thick one. The first coat should be thoroly dry before the second is applied. Stir the mixture frequently while using. Avoid spattering. If the surface to be whitewashed is very dry, moisten it before whitewashing.

SELECTING EXTERIOR COLORS

Many houses are poorly designed and often the inharmonious color combinations used on them tend to accentuate their defects. It is seldom possible to change the design of the house but the well selected color scheme may make bad lines and poor proportions less apparent. It is important to use proper color combinations on the well designed and well proportioned

* From Kentucky Circular No. 128.

house in order to bring out its good lines and make it harmonize with its surroundings.

The desire to have unusual color combinations is often responsible for effects that lack beauty and harmony. It is a mistake to make haphazard choice of colors, basing the selection upon one's preference for certain colors. No matter how beautiful a color may be, the proper effect is lost when used inappropriately. Not all colors are suitable for the exterior of the house. Bright colors are too obtrusive to be used on the body of the house, but they are often pleasing as accent notes in such accessories as awnings, flowers in window boxes, or porch cushions. See page 10 for suggested color schemes.

Color in Relation to Surroundings

The location of the house and other building in their natural surroundings is a factor in the selection of paint and whitewash. Likewise the color scheme of nearby houses is a factor in selecting the proper colors to be used on the dwelling. Inharmonious surroundings frequently detract from otherwise pleasing effects. Hence it is well to choose combinations which will harmonize with neighboring houses and blend with the landscape.

A house surrounded by trees should be painted in colors sufficiently light in value to be in contrast with the trees or it will be lost in the shadows. White, cream, and light gray look well on the house which nestles among trees and shrubbery.

Color in Relation to Size

Light colors make the small house appear larger. White, light gray, and ivory are excellent and they have the advantage of not fading in the sunlight as do many tints of blues and greens. They are pleasing and in good taste provided the finishing touches are harmonious. Thus, if the body of the house were painted pale ivory, with white trim, the roof a moss green, and the porch floor stone color, the effect would be more attractive than the same body color and a mahogany trim, orange porch floor and a green roof. The first color scheme would make the house seem larger whereas the second would make it

appear smaller. The brightness and contrast of the colors in the second color scheme tend to break up the areas.

When the architectural lines permit, the tall, narrow house may be made to appear shorter and wider by using a two-color body treatment. The two colors should not contrast too strongly. Two tints of the same color give satisfactory results. For example, two tints of warm gray may be used, one very light and the other a few shades darker. The upper portion of the house may be painted the darker color. A medium color for the trim helps to bring the two colors together. If this treatment does not conform with the lines of the house, a light color should be used on the body and a darker, pleasingly contrasting color as a trim. Avoid creating "spotty" effects.

Colors for Distinct Styles

The distinct style of architecture requires distinctive treatment. For instance, colonial houses were almost always painted white with green shutters. The remodeled houses of this style, reproductions of it, and other similar types appear at their best when painted in a similar fashion. Light values of soft yellows or grays may be substituted for the white without detracting from the simple, dignified appearance. Bungalows have no tradition to uphold and permit a wide range of treatment. They may be painted in darker values with light trim or pleasing effects may be obtained with light colors as buff, gray, or white. Usually, the roofs should be painted in strong, darker colors such as olive green or venetian red, the choice depending upon the location and surroundings of the house.

Stucco houses painted in tints of cream or buff are more suitable to surroundings in Kentucky than those painted in light, delicate, pastel tints which blend with the colorful landscape of the Southwest.

General Suggestions

A farmstead presents a much more unified, dignified, and pleasing appearance if the house, barn, poultry house, garage, etc., are painted alike. If the house is cream or white, the out-

buildings and fences should be painted similarly or white-washed.

Porch floors should be neutral in color and never made conspicuous. Stone color is inconspicuous and does not show dust so much as some other colors.

The porch ceiling should not be painted a conspicuously different color from those used elsewhere on the exterior. It is a mistake to paint the porch ceiling light blue because undue attention is attracted to it.

Some color schemes need a touch of black to intensify them. Black or very dark green may be used on the window sash or metal rails and hardware.

Exposed pipes and gutters are best painted exactly like the part with which they come in contact.

The color of the trim or the shutters may be repeated on the outside doors, or the doors may be painted a green that is almost black, or stained and varnished with waterproof varnish.

Suggestions for Changing Colors

One cannot always buy ready-mixed paints in the desired colors. Colors may be darkened with lampblack or burnt umber in powder or paste form. The powder should be mixed with turpentine before adding it to the paint. The addition of ivory or white will lighten dark paint. Add any pigment coloring in small quantities and continue until the desired color is obtained.

Bright orange may be toned down by adding blue.

Bright green may be dulled by adding red.

Bright blue may be grayed by adding orange.

Bright yellow may be grayed by adding purple.

Bright red is dulled by adding green.

Suggested Color Schemes

For the colonial and similar styles of houses—

1. Body color—white
Trim—white

Window sash and shutters—warm green in medium light value

Roof—Darker green

Window boxes—white; flowers—pink petunias or salmon-pink geraniums.

Porch furniture—same green as shutters

2. Body color—light warm gray or cream
Trim and sash, doors—white
Shutters—bright, dark green
Roof—green, black or weathered gray

For the stucco or cement house—

1. Body color—cement coating in ivory
Trim and sash, white
Shutters—green
Roof—terra cotta
2. Body color—cement coating in buff
Trim and sash—pale cream
Shutters and roof—green
3. Body color—light gray
Trim—slightly darker gray
Sash—black or white
Roof—maroon

For the brick house—

1. Body—natural red face brick with white mortar
Trim—warm light gray or cream
Sash—white or black
Roof—dull green or weathered gray
Shutters—green or light gray
2. Body—buff face brick
Trim—cream or dull green
Sash—black
Roof—terra cotta or green

Color schemes suitable for the frame house may be used on the painted brick.