



A Brief History of Stains

In the early days of the gardening craze, creosote was used on pretty much everything until it was banned for domestic use due to concern over the toxic and carcinogenic properties of some of its components.

Nowadays you have a choice between oil-based and water-based wood treatments for protecting and colouring your timber.

Oil-based Wood Stain & Preservative

A traditional spirit-based product containing iron oxide pigments that give it an earthy looking long-lasting colour, coming in a limited range of colours.

The smaller molecules holding the preservative soak in to the timber with the larger molecules sticking to the surface leaving a water-proof coating. Smaller molecules are more volatile so evaporate off more quickly and the larger molecules evaporate more slowly but eventually it will all evaporate off.

Oil-based wood stains are flammable and high in VOCs. Unlike water-based products they can be applied in light rain as the product won't be diluted. However, paint brushes, rollers and sprayers need to be cleaned using a solvent leaving waste that cannot be disposed of down drains as it is a bad contaminant for the environment.

There are a range of oil-based products available from wood preservers to decking oils, varnish and wood stains from economy to high grade.

Due to advances in technology and environmental concerns water-based treatments were developed and now are the most popular form of treatments used.

Water-based Wood Stain & Preservative

In simple terms water is used as a carrier instead of oil; the water delivers the colour & preservatives with the resins and wax producing the water-proof coating. The water evaporates off leaving the colour and preservatives soaked in to the timber and a water-proof coating on top.

Water-based products are non-flammable, low in VOCs and when dry are not harmful to the environment. You should not apply them in the rain or when rain is expected before the product has time to dry. Water-based products can be easily cleaned off paint brushes, rollers and sprayers with the wash off disposed of down the drain.

As with oil-based there are a wide range of water-based products available including wood preservers, wood protectors, decking stain, sealants & varnishes and wood stains from economy to high grade.

Why do we Coat our Timber?

The majority of garden timber products from sheds to fences are pre-treated. This offers protection for up to 15 years depending on the quality of the pre-treatment used but this will just give you a base level of protection.

In addition to preserving timber you may want to add colour to your wood, make it more hard-wearing or water-proof. The product you choose will depend on what you want to do.

Wood Preserver

These act against wood destroying fungus known as rot, thus preserving your timber. It can be used as a pre-treatment on un-pressure treated timber and cut ends. Wood Preservers are also used on fences and sheds to pro-long their useful life.

Shed & Fence Treatment

These are the economy products that colour and protect with a water-proof coating. They usually come in a range of the more traditional colours and are generally used on fences and sheds.

Wood Protectors

Produce a water-proof coating that protects wood from weather. These tend to come in a larger variety of colours from traditional browns to contemporary shades and are used on sheds, summerhouses, fences, trellises, pergolas, garden furniture and animal housing.

High Grade/Superior Wood Finishes

Superior wood stain products that are produced to a high standard giving a longer-lasting, harder-wearing, more technically advanced coating. Generally found in a large range of colours these are more suited to log cabins, summerhouses, conservatories, windows, doors, gates and garden furniture.

