

ASK TOM

Now is the time for outdoor maintenance

By Tom Mrakas

The weather is starting to warm up ? well, almost ? so this week I feel the need to give some pointers on when it's a good time to do any exterior painting. The time is getting close, but not quite yet.

First, you will need at least three days of temperatures above 10 degrees to even consider doing exterior painting. Ideally, it should be five days, but three will do.

At the other end of the spectrum, you don't want it to be too hot either.

If it is too cold, then the paint will ? to use my own term for it ? freeze dry. If it is too hot, with extreme heat and sun blazing on the surface, the paint will dry too quickly. In either case you will have the same result ? paint that has not adhered properly to the surface and in a year's time you will undoubtedly have cracks and flakes. A considerable amount of wasted time and effort.

The best time is the spring or fall. Most will prefer to tackle the outdoor projects in the spring to spruce things up for the summer season. Why do it in the fall? It's going to be covered in snow soon enough!

Given our weather, and the extremes of the four seasons, our homes' exteriors take quite the beating ? with painted or stained surfaces taking the worst of it. Careful and considered maintenance is the best way to protect your home's exterior from wear and tear.

The best way to maintain these surfaces for a long time, protect them from rotting and generally keep them looking like new is to do a kind of spring clean up ? much like you do with the rest of your spring cleaning.

Once the weather warms up sufficiently, choose the surfaces that need some care, do a quick sand of the surfaces and then a quick refresh coat of paint. If it's a deck you are maintaining, put on coat of water sealer .

I would recommend this basic outdoor surfaces maintenance at least once a year. The most I would let it go is two. The most common reason that you get the rotted window sills or deck boards rotting is because the maintenance has been neglected.

If you take care of the maintenance on a yearly basis your decks and windows will last much longer ? which, in the long run saves you a great deal of money, and aggravation!

Now if you just don't like the idea of yearly maintenance, then there are a number of relatively care free products you can use to minimize the need to do the outdoor work, but keep in mind though, maintenance free comes at a cost. These products are quite a bit more expensive than regular products.

If you take some time every year and take care of your decks, windows and doors you will have a stunning exterior for many years. Or you can pay a bit extra for products that allow for a relatively care-free exterior. The choice is yours!

So until next week, remember a good job, is a job well done! Also if you have any questions you can reach me at www.facebook.com/anastasisdesign or on twitter, [@ADesign_build](#) and email of course Anastasis@anastasisdesign.ca.