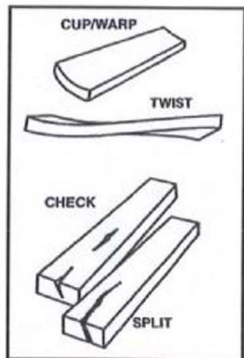


Wood Fence Characteristics and Product Care Instructions

Common maintenance concerns

The continuous changes in weather conditions are extremely harsh on your fence. Your maintenance plan must be geared to combat the problems caused by water absorption, water loss, mildew growth, and discoloration of the wood due to the sun's UV rays. All of the maintenance concerns discussed below are weather related. The degree to which your fence is affected by them depends on many factors. These factors include general climate conditions (such as normal precipitation, humidity, etc) and location in your yard (with regard to sun exposure, foliage coverage, etc).

If your fence is built using pressure-treated lumber, it is important to note that the pressure treatment does not increase the likelihood that your fence will develop these natural defects to any greater degree than the same material left untreated. These weather related defects are beyond the control of the pressure treating process.



Swelling and Shrinking

Continuous water absorption and water loss in the wood used for your fence will create natural defects to the surface. The most common defects are cupping/warping, twisting, checking, and splitting. A well-maintained fence will still experience some of these natural defects. However, the extent can be significantly reduced through a maintenance plan.

Mildew Growth

Whenever wood, including pressure-treated wood, is constantly exposed to moist or humid conditions, it will mildew. This results in an unsightly appearance. Your maintenance plan will need to include cleaning your fence with a cleaner containing mildewcide. This will insure your fence will remain bright and attractive.

Ultraviolet Protection

Without any preventative steps taken to block UV rays, the surface cells of the wood will begin to discolor to a weathered grey color. Although some may prefer this, others won't. If you want to maintain the natural wood color, you will need not only to clean/brighten your fence periodically, but also choose a water-repellant finish with and UV stabilizer. The stabilizer will not prevent eventual discoloration but will slow down the process. Periodic reapplication of a UV stabilizer will help in this effort over an extended period of time.

Initial Maintenance

1. Start by cleaning your fence with a cleaner/brightener that contains mildewcide. Because your fence is new, this is purely preventative.
2. Next, apply a topical sealant for surface protection. Do not use a conventional multi-coat paint system or varnish. The performance is almost always disappointing, and repainting often has to be preceded by scraping and sanding. Instead, choose either a pigmented or clear outdoor wood sealer. Unlike true paints, these sealers allow moisture vapor to leave the wood slowly after the coating has been applied. For that reason, either can be applied as soon as the surface no longer looks wet. Your choice of sealer should include not only water-repellant but also a UV stabilizer to slow the discoloration process. You may want to cover or protect surrounding plants before applying a sealant. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

First Year Maintenance

1. Reapply cleaner/brightener as described in initial maintenance, as well as another application of your outdoor sealant. The topical water-repellant and UV stabilizer will keep your fence looking fresh.
2. Complete the first year maintenance after 12 months.

Future Periodic Preventative Maintenance

1. Depending on the location of the fence, with regard to direct sun exposure, foliage coverage, etc., it may be sufficient to clean/brighten and recoat every two years.
2. If you decide to wait two or more years to perform your next cleaning/brightening, you may want to use a power washer. Be sure that the cleaner/brightener you use has mildewcide.
3. After cleaning, reapply an outdoor wood sealer/stabilizer. Even consistent maintenance will not prevent the natural defects of wood from surfacing, but your efforts can minimize them.