

Wooden windows show respect for nature

Wood is the only natural, renewable material used for making windows. All-important recycling and reforestation benefit when wood is sourced exclusively from strictly controlled plantations where the lifecycle of the trees is respected, and forestry resources are not depleted. By following this policy, the number of broadleaf trees in American forests has increased by more than 90% over the last 50 years. Buying a wooden window means opting for nature.

How to give your wooden window a long life

All materials exposed to the weather are subject to decay if they are not protected as they should be. Concrete crumbles, iron rusts, plastic "dries out", and aluminium oxidizes. Nothing is spared by time, which in recent years has been aided and abetted by smog and acid rain. Of all the materials normally used to make windows, wood has the advantage that even if normal cleaning and care procedures are ignored, it can still be restored. The lifespan and functionality of articles made of wood do, however, depend on periodical care and maintenance. When it is exposed to atmospherical agents, wood is subject to constant slow deterioration, and varnish alone is not enough to prevent this process indefinitely. For this reason, careful checks carried out - generally twice a year (once before the summer, and once before the winter) - in order to assess the condition of the film of varnish can help to prevent decay and keep the wood in a perfect state of repair.

Do not wait for the surface coat to be completely ruined before starting any treatment. Prevention is better than curing!

In the case of lighter shades of primer and of conifers (Swedish pine, Douglas, yellow pine), it is particularly important to check the surfaces periodically, and to touch up any damaged areas without delay.

MAINTENANCE

Hardware - at least once a year:

- Check its operation, and adjust if necessary
- Check holes in the floor, and clean them if necessary
- Lubricate all the moving parts on sashes
- Grease the hardware on the fixed frame

Frame - at least once a year:

- Check the position and pressure of the seal, repositioning it if necessary
- Check water drainage holes, freeing them of any dirt, deposits and insects

Surface coating:

It is recommended to perform the following cleaning operations at regular intervals (at least three/four times a year).

- **Periodical cleaning and revitalization** : this is a very quick and easy operation designed to revitalize the top coating on external windows and/or shutters, whether varnished or stained.
 - **If the surface is badly affected by dust or other impurities**, wash the woodwork first with **Fast Cleaner**, rinse well and dry with a cloth; then spray **EASYCOAT** directly onto the surface that needs treating, and dry thoroughly using the special microfibre cloth. Use a normal, commonly available neutral detergent to clean any product residue off the glass.
 - **If the surface is not particularly dirty**, spray **EASYCOAT** directly onto the surface that needs treating, and dry thoroughly using the special microfibre cloth. Use a normal, commonly available neutral detergent to clean any product residue off the glass.

- **Checking the top coating**

It is advisable to inspect the surface once a year, or every six months if the woodwork is particularly exposed to bad weather, making sure that the top coating has not been damaged or altered in any way. If it has, the damaged areas must be restored using appropriate products.

Wooden windows have a fundamental characteristic: they are made from a natural, living material whose appearance and chemical/physical properties are in constant harmony with the surrounding environment.

Do not worry if...

The cloth stains slightly when ordinary maintenance is carried out on lacquered windows.

A rubbing action generates heat on the surface, softening the varnish and removing a small amount of the pigments contained in the film of varnish. This does not reduce the protection provided by the varnish. For ordinary maintenance it is important to use a soft cloth with water and a neutral detergent which will not damage the film.

Whitish transparent marks are formed when rain settles on a film of varnish which is not perfectly dry.

Water-based varnishes are more sensitive than solvent-based varnishes to water, whether it be in the form of rain or steam. This phenomenon is caused by the emulsifiers in the resins contained in the varnishes, which make the resin particles emulsify when the film of varnish has not completed its drying cycle. These marks will disappear in the sun.

When the outside of a window with a transparent finish (showing the wood) is exposed to the elements, the colour of the wood changes.

Wood is composed of cellulose, lignin and various extracts, all chemical compounds which can be degraded by the ultraviolet component of sunlight.

Over time this affects the colour of the wood to a varying extent, depending on the exposure to the sunlight, the type of wood, and the colour of the primer.

- Exposure to the sunlight: when windows are fitted flush with the outside wall, unprotected (e.g. not covered the roof), or facing south-west, the colour of the wood will tend to change more markedly, as it is more subject to the sun's rays.
- Type of wood: lighter-coloured species (e.g. pine) turn yellow or brown when exposed to the sun; the colour of darker woods (e.g. oak) tends to fade.
- Colour of the primer: "coloured" varnishes for exteriors (e.g. walnut and cherry shades) contain special filters which can absorb the ultraviolet rays of sunlight; natural shade varnishes do not contain these filters. Over time these filters wear out, and lose some of their protective effect.
- To avoid this problem, at least partially, apply the tonifying oil with a cloth at least once every six months.

Yellowish marks appear on lacquered windows (white or light colours)

When es. Oak are lacquered using white or another light colour, yellowish marks may appear along the grain of the wood within 2-3 months of fitting, especially if there is a lot of humidity. This phenomenon is caused by strong colouring substances which rise to the surface when they are solubilized by water. They will tend to disappear in time (from one to three months).

Brownish marks appear on sills

In the event of heavy rainfall, a brownish liquid may seep out of the bottom of shutter boards made es oak, which are all species with a high content of tannins. This liquid may leave a brownish mark on the sill, which can be cleaned off using a 5% disinfectant solution, followed by rinsing with plenty of water. It is advisable to apply tonifying oil to insulate the "ends" of the boards.

The wood undergoes slight swelling after a long damp period.

Wood is a hygroscopic material - i.e. it tends to absorb and release humidity depending on the environmental conditions. This means that even when it has been varnished, anything made of wood may shrink or expand as a result of changes in the humidity. Avoid taking immediate action, and wait for the rate of humidity to become stable. In the case of windows, hardware which has several points of closure is specially esigned so that it can be adjusted to limit any variations.

In the case of shutters, it is important that tolerances are kept to when they are fitted, as any movements will be compensated for by these tolerances.

It is, however, worth remembering that slight deformations are to be considered as normal in wood, and are only defects if they compromise the functionality of the product.