

ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL COMMITTEE

This year, 2017, has seen a doubling in the number of letters from the AC Committee to homeowners asking them to address mold/mildew growing on their house siding, trim, gutters, gables, and brick. We attribute this to the unusually warm and wet weather. If the temperature, humidity, wind, and lighting conditions all align just right you can have mildew “bloom” on your house in a matter of days – “That wasn’t there 4 days ago.”

Many homeowners have called the SSCA office stating they have power washed the mildew off but it keeps coming back, and because they are at wit’s end on how to deal with the situation they ask what else can they do.

It must be noted that mold and mildew are fungi so you need a fungicide to kill them. Plain soap and high pressure water will not kill it; it may remove most of it, but it won’t kill it. There are many fungicides available at Home Depot, Lowes, Ace Hardware, and other stores. Two of the most popular are “Spray and Forget”®, and “Wet and Forget”®, but there are others. Be sure to read the labels and follow the directions and take all the necessary safety precautions noted on the labels. These products can be applied with a pump-up garden sprayer, there is no need for a high pressure washer (more on this later). Best of all they keep working for many months!

Be sure to read the label to ensure the product can be safely applied to the material you are planning to use it on.

Regarding high pressure washers: These can remove the paint and damage the underlying material (whether it be metal, brick, wood, vinyl, or a concrete product such as Hardi® Board or Hardi® Plank). In fact, the James Hardie Company issued Technical Bulletin #20†, June 2013, explicitly recommending NOT to use a pressure washer but instead that you use Jomax®, Mildew Check®, or Mold Armor® along with a soft cloth or soft sponge and garden hose. For oil and grease they recommend a mild liquid dishwashing soap (Dawn®, Ivory®, or Joy®) and water.

So if you see mold/mildew on your house use a fungicide and low pressure water source (garden sprayer or a sponge) to apply it and avoid damaging the paint and underlying material. You will have the peace of mind that the mold/mildew has been removed and won’t return for several months.

† <https://www.jameshardie.com/JamesHardieMainSite/media/Site-Documents/TechnicalBulletins/20-james-hardie-siding-cleaning-and-maintenance.pdf>