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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Tuesday, April 2, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Spring is the time when you just naturally begin to think about fixing up your home. Just as sure as April comes around, the mailbag fills up with letters asking about painting the house.

The first letter out of the mailbag today says: "Is spring the best time to paint the outside of the house?"

Mild dry spring weather is ideal weather for painting, though Mr. F. L. Browne of the U. S. Forest Service's Forest Products Laboratory says you can paint any time the weather is dry and warm enough for the paint to go on well yet not too warm for the painter's comfort. The wood surface needs to be dry to take paint well. Never paint in rainy, foggy, or freezing weather. You get best results when the thermometer registers somewhere between 60 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. During cold damp weather, paint hardens more slowly than in warm dry weather. If the weather suddenly turns cold while the coat is hardening, the paint may wrinkle. Or dew may form on the fresh paint and damage it. If damp weather sets in when you're in the midst of a paint job, stop until the weather clears and the surface dries again.

As to the season, Mr. Browne reports that paint put on in the spring or summer doesn't usually soil as badly as paint put on in the late fall or winter. In the summer wet paint is likely to catch insects. All in all, you can't beat a clear dry mild spring day for painting.

Another letter this week inquires: "How soon after a new house is built should the paint go on?"

The answer is: The sooner the better on the outside. Put the first or priming coat on exterior woodwork at once. Second or third coats go on within 2 weeks. In warm dry weather you can start the second coat within 2 days after the first has gone on. If you want a good paint job don't let the wood stand for weeks with only a priming coat. And don't put off the third coat 6 months or more.

Painting inside a new house is a different matter. Don't paint the inside until all the moisture from plastering and concrete work has dried out. But as soon as the interior is dry, put on the paint or varnish. Otherwise the wood will become rough and soiled and you'll have to do extra cleaning and sandpapering.

As for painting plaster and concrete, you can let that go until a convenient time. Plaster and concrete take paint better after they have aged.

Now here's a question about paint as a protection for wood: "Does paint keep wood from decay or why is it said to protect wood?"

Paint does not prevent decay. If decay gets in, a painted house will rot just as quickly as an unpainted one. The way to prevent decay is to build your house properly and use decay-resistant wood or treated wood where you need it. However, good paint does keep wood from weathering. It keeps the wood smooth and helps prevent it from warping and checking.

Here's a letter asking why barns are so often painted red. The letter says: "Does red barn paint hold up better than other paint or why are barns so often painted red?"

Red barn paint is colored with iron oxide and properly made iron oxide paint costs less and is more durable than the best white or tinted paints.

Now here's a familiar question: "I am repainting my house and I should like to use a different kind of paint without going to the trouble of removing

all the original paint. Is there any reason why I shouldn't use one kind of paint over another?"

A very good reason your new paint job is likely to be a failure. Once the building has been painted, you should always stick to the same kind of paint unless you take off all the original paint with a blow-torch or house-paint remover.

"How often does a house need repainting?" is a question in another letter.

Mr. Browne says in most parts of the United States 4 or 5 years is as long as coatings of white or tinted paint will remain durable. If you don't want to repaint that often, better use a very durable paint such as iron oxide paint or aluminum paint. Pure white lead paint is another that stands up for long intervals

Well, if you have further painting questions, you are welcome to a Department of Agriculture bulletin called "Painting on the Farm." "Painting on the Farm" is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1452. A postcard to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., will bring it to you.

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