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Shed & Summerhouse Damp and Mould Prevention

Timber sheds and summerhouses are a great addition to outdoor spaces, and a common feature of gardens up and down the country. However, damp and mould can be the downfall of these attractive buildings, which can leave you searching for answers to combat this problem. To help you eliminate these issues, please find below information to remove mould and prevent damp in your garden building.

What causes damp?

As the name suggests, damp is caused by high humidity and is most prevalent during seasons where the air has high moisture content, such as winter and spring. Being a natural product, timber is the most susceptible material to damage by moist conditions as it is very absorbent. Damp can cause premature rot, mould, and cause the timber structure to become misshapen or sag if left untreated. These problems can be exacerbated by wet weather and lack of air flow through the building. Damp may also be worse in buildings that don't get much natural light or warmth from the sun, for example, if they are in a dark corner of the garden or if the building is shaded by trees, walls, or other buildings.

How should I remove the mould in my shed or summerhouse?

Before the mould spreads, clean the mould from the affected surface by using a cloth/soft brush and any good household mould and mildew remover. You can purchase specific timber cleaner which tackles mould and mildew from hardware stores if you wish. Once the mould has been removed, try following the preventative measures below.

How can I prevent damp in my shed or summerhouse?

Sheds and summerhouses can sometimes be abandoned for months on end, especially in the colder seasons, meaning that no fresh air flow is entering the building. The stagnant air can hold a lot of moisture which the condenses into water droplets and subsequently forms mildew and mould on the timber and on belongings. This mould is not a cause for concern if tackled in the early stages, but may become an issue if left untreated. To prevent this, try and get some air circulating by leaving windows open, blowing a fan in the shed, installing a vent or dehumidifier pots in the building, or simply leaving the door open on dry days.

Increasing fresh air flow is not just about getting it into the building, you will need to think about all the areas the air will need to circulate. Storing items extremely close to the walls will prohibit circulation in that area and increase the risk of mould. Try to leave space around items, if this is not possible, try to move the items around frequently.

You can also avoid mould formation by reducing the number of items that can store moisture, such as cardboard boxes, open containers with liquid, wet tools etc.



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How can maintenance affect the building?

Maintaining the exterior of your building will positively contribute to the building's weather and moisture penetration resistance.

By regularly checking and maintaining the following, your building's weather resistance will be improved:

- Roof covering: check there is no damage to the roof covering which may be allowing more moisture in than it should.
- Exterior coating: Timber needs to be kept well nourished to provide many years of reliable service. The exterior boarding should be treated at least annually with a good wood preserver to prevent the timber from prematurely aging/weathering (splitting, shrinking, warping).
- If your building is painted, you should maintain (touch up) the paintwork annually and check for signs of wear and tear in the paint. Dependent on what type is used, we recommend repainting the whole building every 2-3 years with annual maintenance checks. If moisture can get behind the paint through degradation of paintwork, this may lead to premature rot.

Another good preventative measure would be to treat the inside of your building with a wood preserver. We dip our building in Protek wood preserver at manufacture to give it a coating of wood preservative. Following installation, we recommend treating the inside and outside of the building with Barretine Premier Wood Preserver which has the following benefits:

- highly effective solvent-based timber preserver
- contains active ingredients effective against moulds, wood destroying and wood discolouring fungi as well as against wood boring insects.
- penetrates wood easily and thereby gets into the inner layers.
- moisture regulating.

5 Litre tins are available to purchase from Shed City

Should you wish to purchase your own wood preserver please take the below in to account:

What is the difference between a TREATMENT and a PRESERVER?

To be able to call a product a PRESERVER it must be registered with the HSE and contain active ingredients and display the HSE number. TREATMENTS can claim to protect the timber in other ways by using water repelling waxes, surface or film biocides and UV filters but these cannot claim to 'preserve' the timber