

CHEMICALLY PRESERVED WOOD

Are you planning to build a structure with exposed wood? If so, you should consider these facts about wood preservatives before you proceed. All woods will decay if exposed to damp conditions over a period of time, although some varieties resist longer than others. Redwood and cedar, while the longest lasting of the hardwoods available for outdoor construction, are expensive and can be difficult to find.

An increasingly popular alternative is the use of chemically preserved wood. Because less expensive wood can be used, this approach offers an attractive alternative for construction projects. There are three methods of applying preservative to wood: brushing or spraying, dipping and pressure. Brushing or spraying uses the smallest amount of preservative and is the least time consuming of the three methods. Years of service gained are the least, however, because of the shallow penetration afforded. Coal-tar creosote, pentachlorophenol (penta) and copper naphthenate solutions are the most commonly used preservatives.

Only copper naphthenate can be recommended for landscaping use where the wood will come into direct contact with roots or plants. Creosote and penta can be used for fencing, posts, decks, and edging, if there will be no plants in the immediate area.

If the brushing or spraying method is used, protection can be prolonged by applying multiple coats and by paying special attention to joints, areas that will touch the ground or other building materials and other places where moisture may collect. Immersing the wood in preservative is more effective than brushing or spraying because it allows deeper penetration of the preservative into the wood. Immersion periods of a few hours up to several days can be used. The same materials used for brushing and spraying are used for dipping.

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