

Gutter & Siding Cleaning

Gutter and siding cleaning of our homes is not part of the 'maintenance free' life style we all thought we were getting. Gutter and siding cleaning also seems easier for younger people but harder for me. Not that I am that old, but bending, climbing a ladder and carrying seem to be a lot more difficult then they used to be. So I look for easier ways to do things and listen to the experience of others. For one thing, I have always had my own pressure washer but wouldn't think of using it on my siding or automobile unless I was about 4 to 5 feet away so I wouldn't do any damage to my paint job or the siding (or force water behind the siding). When you are three to four feet away from what you are cleaning the pressure generated is about what you would get from a garden hose nozzle. I use my pressure washer for the mailbox post, sidewalk and the patio. From talking to others and testing quite a few products myself I came up with the following two cleaners that I feel I can recommend. One for the gutters and one for the siding, I couldn't find one that could actually do both well although many were touted as being able to. The first one is for the gutters and the brand name is 'Awesome'. It is available at the Dollar Store for a buck a quart. You would probably only need one to do the job but at that price buy two to make sure. It is useful for many other

cleaning chores around the house also, like cleaning golf clubs. Just don't tell your children/grandchildren you are spending all this dough. Spray it directly on the gutter



surface and wipe off with a damp rag. The dirt and stains disappear like magic.

The other cleaner is available at Home Depot, is made by Zinsser and is called JOMAX House Cleaner and Mildew Killer. This product is in the \$5 to \$6 range though so you may want to pass it by your heirs first. One quart makes five gallons and is more than

enough to do a one story home. It gets mixed in a pump type sprayer with water and Clorox and you spray it directly on the siding (try to avoid the windows). Wet your shrubs and flowers with your garden hose first just to be safe, spray the mixture on your house siding with the pump sprayer, wait five minutes or so and rinse off with your garden hose. This got rid of all the green and brown stuff and left the siding looking new except for those little black dots that stick no matter what.

These spots are called Artillery Fungus. The artillery fungus (also known as the shotgun fungus) is a fungus that thrives in wet weather in the mulch



of planting beds near homes. The fungus, which grows in the mulch, is white or tan and forms tiny (1/4 inch) puffball-like structures that contain spore masses. As these structures dry, the spore mass is "shot out" of the fungal vessel to a distance as much as 10 or 20 feet (thus artillery). These spore masses have a very sticky surface and stand out as black spots on the side of your home or car. Using a plastic scraper you can scrape them before using the cleaner and it will help some but is a lot of work with only fair results. So, that said, you can go out and buy these (or similar) products and do it yourself or give this article to your handyman and have him buy them and do the cleaning while you test your new lawn furniture. During my research for this article I discovered it is easier to lift a golf bag than a ladder, even though the golf bag is heavier. Who knew?

This and previous around the house articles can be retrieved on the web at

http://www.unc-1.com/fairways_legend_maintenance_arti.htm