

Prep And Patience Key To Painting A House

BY NICOLE VILLALPANDO

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Painting is one of the easiest way to transform the look of your home, and yet, often, we're just not good at it. We think we can do a room in a day, the whole house in a weekend.

"People think painting is a very easy thing," says Michael Parreno of 78 Painting, Textures, Plasters and More, in Austin, Tex. "It's all about the prep and many years of experience. ... Patience is everything in painting."

That prep work is going to be about 75 percent of the job, says Louie Funk of Funk Paint Contractors. "If people take time to tape off the room, they can do almost as good a job as we can. They've got to be serious about taping it off."

Painting also is about knowing what jobs you can do and what jobs are best for the professionals. And, most importantly, it's about having the right kind of tools and paint for the job.

Choosing the right color is also important. Gray is the big color right now, says Stacy Paulson of Stacy Paulson Design. It's a light-to-medium gray, but you have to be careful because some grays tend to go blue and when it's too cool, gray can go wrong, she says. "You've got to find the right gray that stays gray," she says.

Clement Ebbo of Clement's Paints says he's selling a lot of Benjamin Moore's Revere Pewter. Paulson says people are playing with all-gray walls and white trim. "It's really clean."

Ebbo and Paulson also see people going for bright colors as well and definitely ditching the beige that was so popular for so long.

"People are more adventurous with paint," Paulson says of her clients, including one for which she just did black caviar walls. "If you don't like it, in a year or two, you can repaint."

Before you pick any color, spend \$5-\$7 and get a sample. Paint a square of it on the walls and look at it at different times of day to make sure it looks right in any light and with your furniture.

Paulson says she hires professionals for her clients, but for her own home, she paints the interior walls herself. Light colors are less risky than trying to do dark colors.

For dark colors, as well as trim work and exteriors, the professional might be worth the investment.

When you're looking for a professional painter, you want to make sure the company is bonded and insured. Ask how long the painter has been in the business. You also want to know how many people will be on the job. If you're doing your whole house, know that if the company is bringing only one or two people, they are going to be there for weeks versus the time a whole crew would take.

Ask for detailed estimates. How many coats will they do? What kind of prep work? What kind of paint will they use? The paint is also going to be only about 15 percent of the total bill. Labor is your big cost.

For exteriors, if you decide to paint it yourself, know you're going to be on a ladder a lot (especially for two-story homes). You'll need to pressure wash to start with a clean surface, but hand scrub around the windows and other delicate areas. You'll need to check the condition of the wood and siding to know whether there are spots that need to be replaced.

You'll fill in holes and caulk around the trim, windows and doors.

Many professionals use paint sprayers for the exteriors, but you have to be careful. Spray can go everywhere and be influenced by the direction of the wind. You'll also lose about 25 percent of the paint to overspray. Cover with tape and paper 3 feet to 4 feet around the brick and cover the windows and doors. Painters should apply at least two coats with a good paint.

While you can paint indoors any time of the year as long as you have the air conditioner or heater running to pull out the humidity and keep the temperature consistent, painting outside is a different story. Avoid days that are excessively humid or raining or drizzling.

Cold is an issue with painting. If it's going to be colder than 35 degrees at any point in the 24-hour to 36-hour drying time, do not paint.

In the heat of summer, you also have to be careful. Paint in the morning and follow the shade of the house. If paint dries too quickly it won't adhere to the surface and can crack or peel off later. Make sure you're using paint designed for exteriors.

With trim and cabinets, you want this paint job to last because it's not the kind of job you're going to do often. Choose the best quality paint you can afford, Funk says. Traditionally you'd use oil-based

eventually die out, they can remain present in the soil for months, and can even infect produce planted after the flood.

"Depending on the location, floodwaters may contain contaminants such as agricultural or other chemicals; as well as disease-causing organisms from fresh manure, septic systems, and even lagoons," Burrows said. "If the homeowner knows the area was contaminated with feedlot or septic overflow, it is recommended that no produce be used from the garden for 180 days," she stated.

WHAT TO DO WITH GARDEN VEGETABLES AFTER A FLOOD

Burrows said that any leafy greens that are eaten fresh, such as lettuce or cabbage, should be destroyed. "They are at risk of contamination for at least four months following a flood," Burrows said.

She added that leafy greens that are typically cooked, such as spinach or chard, should be cut back completely and allowed to regrow before using.

Once they regrow, Burrows advised that they be thoroughly cooked before using. Any above-ground produce, such as peas, beans,



IMAGE: METRO GRAPHICS



NICOLE VILLALPANDO/
AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN/MCT

Doing the perfect home painting job yourself means taking good care with the prep work to get a good finished product. Picking the right paint and color is the start. Shades of gray are trendy this year.

paint, which has powerful fumes. That's why professionals use masks when working with these products. Homeowners usually have to stay elsewhere for a few days. Now a water and oil hybrid can cut down on some of those fumes. Not all the professionals have had good results with the hybrids.

With oil-based or the hybrid, you're going to sand the wood smooth, use caulk around the edges and to fill in holes and cracks, apply a primer that is made for the kind of paint you'll use and then paint.

So, if you've decided to do the interior walls yourself, first move everything you can to the center of the room so you have space to work. Remove electrical and light switch covers.

Take time to place tape carefully in a straight line around the windows, doors, baseboards and crown molding. Some professionals use brown paper trim rolls in addition to tape to cover crown molding and baseboards.

There are a lot of tapes to choose from, and what's important is the release time. If you're able to complete the job in a day or two, you can pick a three-day release tape. But for bigger jobs, such as faux finishing or more detail work, choose a 14- to 60-day-release tape. Parreno also likes to run a line of white caulk between the ceiling and the wall and the wall and the baseboard to get a clean line.

Make sure to tape down the drop cloth or the brown paper you are using to cover the floors to avoid leaks from between the wall and the floor. Never use plastic to cover the floor. It won't absorb paint and if you step in a drop of paint, you'll spread it everywhere.

When you're ready to remove the tape, run a utility knife between the wall and the tape to make sure you have broken the seal. You'll avoid ripping some of the paint off the wall.

Not every job needs a primer. If you have a flat, light-color paint on the wall already, you can skip the priming step. If you have dark colors and want to go to lighter colors, use a primer. If your walls have a semi-gloss or another paint with a sheen, priming will make painting easier. If you're painting light colors, you can use a white primer. If you're painting dark colors, use a gray primer. Your paint store can help you determine whether you need a primer and what kind.

More paints are coming as paint and primer

combinations. Most of our professional painters say this is just a marketing tool. It's basically a high-quality paint that will cover well, but it's not that much different from what was already available in high-quality paint.

Don't go cheap on interior paint, Ebbo says, because you'll just have to do more coats. Some of the higher-end latex paints might be \$60 to \$75 a gallon but will take only one coat with touch-ups, or two at most. You don't have to go that high-end, but avoid paints that are less than \$30 a gallon; with those you're going to be painting again and again. Some of the new higher-end flat paints are scrubable, so you don't have to go with semi-gloss if you have children.

Low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) or no-VOC paints are becoming more common, but ask whether the tint is also low VOC or no VOC. Some brands have low or no-VOC in the base paint, but not in the tint, which means you're still getting VOCs.

Don't scrimp on brushes either, Funk says. Instead of an \$8 brush, you want to choose a \$16-\$20 brush in either nylon or a nylon and polyester blend. Avoid straight polyester. Immediately wash brushes with soap and water and dry after use. "Treat a good brush like a screwdriver," Ebbo says. Hang it up in the paper or plastic case it came with to protect it for the next job.

Martin Ortega, owner of MJD Ortega Painting, says if he cleans his brushes well, he can get many jobs out of them. Even rollers he can get three or four jobs out of with proper care.

You'll use the brush for detail areas around trim and windows. Use rollers for large, uninterrupted areas. Professionals use sheepskin, but you don't have to go that high end. You do have to make sure you know which type of nap (that's the thickness) you need for the texture you have. If you have a light texture or smooth walls, you'll use a nap of 3/8 inch. For thick texture, you need 1/2 inch.

Now for the actual painting: Most people get a pan to pour paint into and then use a roller or a brush. That can make for a messy job with a lot of drips and the constant need to refill the pan. Parreno uses a 5-gallon bucket with a grid and mixes the gallons together to make sure the color is the same; one gallon could be a slightly different tint. He dips his brush and roller in the paint and then knocks off the excess paint on the edge of the bucket.

Most professionals use an up-and-down stroke, but a lot of home improvement television shows recommend a W stroke. That stroke works well if you have a lot of texture and are using cheap paint. With good paint and the right roller or brush, you can just go up and down.

You want your roller or brush to have a lot of paint on it and frequently dip it back into the paint to avoid painting with a dry brush or roller. Make sure the brush and roller have an even coat to avoid streaking. "You can feel it on the roller if it's dry or needs more or needs less paint," Ortega says. "You can feel it in your arms."

Seal up unused paint and store it in an air-conditioned space so you can use it for touch-ups later. A hot garage or attic will destroy the paint.

If you do need to get rid of the paint, check with your city or garbage company about how to do so.

Extension Hosts Canning Workshops

BROOKINGS — SDSU Extension will host several canning workshops as part of the Master Food Preservation Mentor Program across the state.

The Master Food Preservation Mentor program is for individuals interested in learning the USDA Home Food Processing Guidelines and willing to volunteer their time to provide this valuable information to others, explained Lavonne Meyer, SDSU Extension Field Specialist.

"Participants may choose to be a mentor at the conclusion of the workshop after they have learned more about the program. We encourage those that love to can, or want to learn more about canning to sign up for this workshop," Meyer said.

Classes will be offered at the following sites:

- July 8 — Rapid City, Pennington County Extension-Walter Taylor Building, 601 E. Centre
- July 23 — Pierre, TF Riggs High School, 1010 E. Broadway Avenue
- July 24 — Chamberlain, St. Joseph's Indian School, 1301 N. Main Street
- July 30 — Brookings, SDSU Foods Lab, Wagner Hall

The day will begin with a presentation on the basics of food preservation. The topics covered will include cost effectiveness, equipment and supplies, selling your product, water bath and pressure canning, mentoring others and resources. The processing of low-acid vegetables with a pressure canner will begin during lunchtime. Participants are asked to bring their own lunch and will eat while keeping an eye on their pressure canners.

Participants will use a boiling water bath canner as they process jams, jellies, and other acid or acidified foods. This hands-on session will provide an opportunity to experience reduced and no sugar options when making jams and jellies. They will also learn how to use a pH meter.

The workshop is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Participants are asked to bring their own lunch.

Pre-registration is required one week prior to each course. Register by contacting Lavonne Meyer at the Sioux Falls Regional Center, 605-782-3290 or lavonne.meyer@sdstate.edu. Class size is limited to about 16 people per course, depending on the location.

For more information visit [www.igrow.org](http://igrow.org).

Flooding Increases Risk Of Foodborne Illness From Produce

BROOKINGS — Soil in gardens that were recently flooded may not be safe for growing fruit and vegetables, SDSU Extension specialists explained.

"Foodborne illness has been associated with garden vegetables contaminated with floodwaters containing pathogenic bacteria, parasites and viruses, said Joan Hegerfeld-Baker, SDSU Extension Lecturer and Food Safety Specialist.

Hegerfeld-Baker said the more common pathogens involved in these outbreaks include E. coli O157:H7, *Cryptosporidium parvum*, *Cyclospora*, *Giardia*, *Campylobacter* and *Hepatitis A*. All of these diseases make people very ill and in some instances have long-term complications or may be fatal.

Hegerfeld-Baker emphasized that gardeners should not attempt to make an unsafe, flooded garden produce safe by using chlorine bleach or a similar product. "The level of contamination on a flooded garden can be at very dangerous levels," Hegerfeld-Baker said.

Rhoda Burrows, SDSU Extension Horticulture Specialist recommends that gardeners keep in mind that although pathogens will

"Depending on the location, floodwaters may contain contaminants such as agricultural or other chemicals; as well as disease-causing organisms from fresh manure, septic systems and even lagoons."

RHODA BURROWS

squash, melons, or tomatoes that were exposed to flood waters should also be picked and discarded. Using a mulch to shield plants and produce from soil contact can help reduce risk for fruit that is formed after the flood recedes.

She advised that during the four months following the flood, any root crops such as carrots or potatoes should either be discarded, or be peeled and thoroughly cooked.

Thoroughly wash produce with thick outer rinds, such as melons and squash, before cutting open.

When it comes to strawberry plants which have been exposed to floodwaters, Burrows advised to remove any blossoms or set fruit. "Any strawberries that are consumed within in the next 120 days from these plants should be cooked before consuming," she said.

ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA TO WASH FIRST

For fruit and vegetables that did not come in contact with flood waters, Hegerfeld-Baker reminded individuals that the safest way to protect yourself from foodborne illness is to always wash fruit or vegetables before eating.

"When washing freshly picked produce, use water that is at least 10 degrees warmer than the fruit or vegetable and wash with running water and use friction," Hegerfeld-Baker said. She discouraged the use of detergents or chlorine bleach.

Hegerfeld-Baker added that some sprays approved for use on fruits and vegetables are available and may be helpful in removing debris, dirt and surface microorganisms. "However, if the garden produce was flooded, don't attempt to

make an unsafe flooded garden product safe by using a fruit and vegetable spray, chlorine bleach or other product."

Hegerfeld-Baker and Burrows strongly encourage gardeners to use good personal hygiene practices. Wash your hands before and after gardening. Leave your garden shoes at the door and change clothing after working in a flooded garden.

"Avoid direct contact with floodwaters, including the soil, as much as possible. Young children can be at a high risk for some food-

borne illnesses. If a garden plot has been flooded, consider either not having young children in the garden with you, or taking every precaution to utilize good personal hygienic practices," Hegerfeld-Baker said.

To learn more about food safety, flood cleanup and other flood-related issues visit <http://igrow.org>.

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