

# Weather beaters

## Best Buys for painting the outside of your home

With spring round the corner, this is a good time to do those jobs we put off during winter, such as painting the outside of the house.

A lick of paint can quickly and cheaply do wonders for how your home looks. For brickwork, concrete, pebble dash or render, you need to use masonry paint. We've tested leading big names and own brands to find out how easy they are to apply, how well they age on smooth and

rough masonry, and how well they fight off mould and yellowing.

Some paints from Dulux, Johnstones and Sandtex are not in our test because their ingredients have changed during our testing time.

In this report we also offer advice on painting masonry or exterior wood.



## How we test



Why this test takes two and a half years to complete

### Paints that last

After buying the paints in late 2004, we prepared the 16 concrete masonry slabs used in testing by cleaning them with fungicide to kill off any mould or algae. Six slabs were rough, six were smooth and four were rough slabs cracked to show how paint coped with flaws on wall surfaces.

We followed the manufacturers' instructions in applying the paint and checked how easy this was. Then we stand the slabs vertically in a field, half facing north, half south, and left them to withstand all kinds of weather. We checked them after three, 12, 24 and 30 months for weathering, surface deterioration, mould and yellowing.

## Best Buys

Own brands did well against the big names in our test

**B&Q Smooth Wall and Masonry Paint** (79%) wears well on rough or smooth masonry and is great at tackling mould. There was slight yellowing. You'll get best results with two coats, but it's easy to apply. There are nine colours, in 2.5-, 5- and 10-litre tins. £6.50 for 2.5 litres.

You'll need only one coat of **Berger Weathercoat** (76%), but it's £16.99 for five litres and its spreading rate is only 6.5 square metres a litre. It's easy to apply, and slabs looked good after 30 months. Weathercoat tackles mould well, but yellowed slightly. It comes in nine colours in 5-litre tins. Cheapest store Woolworths.

**Dulux Weathershield Smooth Masonry Paint** (75%) is £9.50 for 2.5

litres. Its spreading rate is impressive, at up to 15 square metres a litre. You'll need two coats for best results, and it's easy to apply. It yellowed slightly but is excellent at staving off mould. We also tested the thicker **Weathershield One Coat Smooth Exterior Masonry Paint**, which was trickier to apply. It comes in 14 colours and 2.5-, 5- and 10-litre tins. Cheapest store Wilkinsons.

**B&Q Textured Wall and Masonry Paint** (74%) is £6.50 for 2.5 litres. It needs two coats, but it's easy to apply. The slabs deteriorated slightly over 30 months, but it's great against mould and showed little yellowing. A textured paint gives a rougher finish. It comes in nine colours, in 2.5-, 5- and 10-litre tins.



### OTHER PAINTS TESTED

	PRICE (£) FOR 2.5 LITRES WHITE	SPREADING RATE (SQ METRES PER LITRE OF PAINT)
<b>DULUX</b> Weathershield One Coat Smooth Exterior Masonry Paint	25.99 <sup>a</sup>	15
<b>ECOS</b> Smooth Masonry Paint	32.36 <sup>a</sup>	6 to 9
<b>JOHNSTONES</b> Stormshield Highbuild Mid Sheen Masonry Paint	13.98	6 to 10
<b>JOTUN</b> Max for Mur	27.99 <sup>b</sup>	4 to 7
<b>SANDEX</b> One Coat Ultra Smooth Masonry Paint	11.98	7
<b>WILKO</b> High Performance Smooth Finish Masonry Paint	5.99	10
<b>WILKO</b> High Performance Fine Texture Masonry Paint	5.99	5

<sup>a</sup> Price for five litres <sup>b</sup> Price for three litres

### ALSO TESTED

We also tested the paints in the table, left. We found that they all did a reasonable job and were close in performance. If you can't find one of our four Best Buys, these would be good alternatives.

## Painting masonry

A step-by-step guide to painting masonry



1 A stiff brush will shift loose cement or brick. Fill holes before painting.



2 Wash walls with fungicide to stop mould growing, and use primer to bind the surface together.



3 It's easier to use rollers than brushes and they're better on rough surfaces. Use an extension pole to paint higher sections from the ground.



4 Go from right to left and top to bottom if you're right-handed (left to right if left-handed) to reduce the need to work across yourself, important when working on a ladder.

## Buying advice

Tips on buying paint and disposing of leftovers

### HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

Manufacturers give a paint's spreading rate on the side of the tin. This shows how many square metres a litre they claim it covers. To find how much you need, multiply the wall's width by the height. Subtract the area taken by windows and doors. Divide the total by the spreading rate to find how much to buy. Double for two coats. Rough masonry surfaces need more paint than smooth walls.

### COLOUR MATCHING

Mixing and matching services for masonry paints are limited. Focus offers matching in just two stores

and mixes only Dulux Weathershield paints. B&Q matches Dulux paints. Wickes doesn't offer a mixing service for masonry paints.

### LEFTOVER PAINT

Most shops buy back unopened tins for the full price within 28 days if you have a receipt. Your council should recycle leftover paint – see [www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com) for your nearest recycling centre. You can give leftover paint to Community RePaint, which gives it to charities, and community and voluntary groups. See [www.communityrepaint.org.uk](http://www.communityrepaint.org.uk) for collection points.

## WHAT GIVES PAINT THAT SMELL?

Many paints contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These solvents evaporate as a paint dries and gives it a distinctive smell. They have been linked to air pollution and health concerns. The proportion of VOCs given on the paint tin ranged from 0 to more than 50 per cent. 'Green' paints contain little or no VOCs. We tested one, Ecos Smooth Masonry Paint. It was durable and great at fighting mould.

## Contacts

**B&Q** 0845 609 6688  
[www.diy.com](http://www.diy.com)

**Berger** 0870 240 1127  
[www.berger-paint.co.uk](http://www.berger-paint.co.uk)

**Dulux** 0870 444 1111  
[www.dulux.co.uk](http://www.dulux.co.uk)

**Ecos** 01524 852371  
[www.ecospaints.com](http://www.ecospaints.com)

**Johnstones**  
0800 591717  
[www.johnstones-trade.com](http://www.johnstones-trade.com)

**Jotun** 01724 400000  
[www.jotun.co.uk](http://www.jotun.co.uk)

**Sandtex**  
0870 240 1127  
[www.sandtex.co.uk](http://www.sandtex.co.uk)

**Wilko** 01909 505505  
[www.wilkinsonplus.com](http://www.wilkinsonplus.com)

### OUR RESEARCH

When selecting paints to test, we consult manufacturers, market intelligence reports and industry experts, then check availability on the high street and online.

The paints that we tested include top-sellers from the most popular brands, an environmentally friendly paint together with paints from some lesser-known brands.

We rate the paints based on the following criteria: durability 70 per cent; application 10 per cent; mould 10 per cent; yellowing 10 per cent.

## PAINTING WOOD

Some tips on using exterior gloss to paint window frames and other wooden surfaces outside

### Preparation

Wash woodwork, as painted-over dirt or blemishes will affect the finish.

A hot-air gun will get rid of cracked or peeling paint on windows or doors. Chemical strippers are handy for removing paint in areas that are hard to reach, like the insides of door or window frames. Filler will pack cracks.

Sand new or bare wood until it's smooth. Prime it and let it dry. When repainting already painted wood, lightly sand it so that the paint has something to stick to.



### Painting

Two coats normally give a better finish. The undercoat should be thin, evenly spread and left to dry before applying top coat.

On flat surfaces, use an even number of vertical and horizontal brush strokes.

Don't overload brushes, as this will cause drips.

For panelled doors and thin window frames, paint top to bottom. Use vertical strokes for vertical sections and horizontal strokes for horizontal sections.

