



## Scraping Shingle Siding

by Henry Spies

**Q.** *What is the best way to strip alligatored paint from shingle siding? Scraping is not working for us because it loosens many of the old shingles.*

**A.** There is no easy way to strip paint from shingle siding. A combination of a disk sander with 30- to 50-grit paper, applied with a light but deft touch, followed by spot scraping, seems to be the only practical way. If the paint is latex, a carbide sanding disk will be needed. If the shingles are readily coming loose from scraping, they may be too old and brittle, and probably should be replaced.

If you do choose to remove the old paint, test the paint to determine whether any of it contains lead (it probably does), and take appropriate precautions during removal and disposal. Guidelines for the safe removal of lead paint vary from state to state, so check with your building department before proceeding. At the very least, wear a dust mask, drape the scaffolding with plastic to contain the dust, and spread drop cloths over the ground so that the paint chips can be collected and disposed of, not left in the soil where children might play.

### Skeptical of Truss Plates

**Q.** *What happens to truss plate connectors as the wood truss members expand and contract with temperature and moisture changes? The prongs on the plate don't seem to penetrate very deeply, and it seems as if they could work loose over time.*

**A.** There is no question that the wood shrinks away from the prongs on truss plates as the lumber dries, and this does reduce the strength of the truss somewhat. But trusses are designed with a large safety factor. For example, most trusses are designed for a roof load of 40 pounds per square foot, yet joist-and-rafter roof construction usually fails at less than 15 psf, and such failures are rare. Most of the loosening of the plates would occur during the initial drying period rather than from repeated moisture changes.

A greater problem is the lateral loads often placed on trusses as they bend and twist during handling and erection. Trusses are designed to resist vertical loads. The lateral loads that occur when they are taken off the truck, and when they are swung from an inverted position

on the wall plates to the upright position, can loosen the plates, or even pop them off one of the members being joined.

### Stains on Metal Roofs

**Q.** *A roof I installed has stains running down the steel standing-seam roofing below the skylights. What might be causing this and how can it be prevented?*

**A.** If the stains are rust trails, they could be coming either from the cut edges of the roofing or from the nails. More than likely it is from the nails, so use stainless-steel nails or screws to secure the flashing.

If the stains are dark, the corrosion is probably caused by a galvanic reaction between the skylight flashing and steel roofing panels. Some skylights come with pre-formed copper flashings that will react with the cut edges of the steel roofing panels in a relatively short amount of time. The stain could also be coming from a reaction between the nails and the flashing they are holding in place. To prevent problems, bend your flashings from the same type of coil-stock as the roofing.

### Stickering White Woods

**Q.** *I use a lot of rough-sawn 1x6 T&G pine siding. This often comes from the mill slightly green. What is the best way to dry and stabilize white woods so that no irregular coloring occurs from the stickers?*

**A.** Allowing the material to air-dry will certainly help stabilize the white wood. On a tour of an Oregon mill last summer, I discovered that they were using mahogany stickers in their drying kiln. Mahogany is strong, and doesn't seem to stain the wood. If mahogany is hard to get, try fence pickets made of recycled polyethylene. These should do the job without staining, too, and are readily available at most lumberyards and home centers. While the wood is drying, keep it sheltered from the sun to prevent discoloration from uneven exposure to the sunlight. ■

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