

from you...

Q. What is the effect – in the medium and long term – of washing brushes after using waterborne paints and tipping the wash water onto the soil? How long does it take for the diluted paint solids to break down? I suspect there may be a different answer for clay/loam soils, compared to sandy ones. I usually tip the first concentrated wash into a hole in the ground and then tip subsequent washes onto the lawn. Is there a better way?

A. The main concerns over paint in soil are not the binder or the pigments – which produce only visual pollution – but the water-soluble surfactants and thickeners. These get broken down by the microbes in the soil, and soil type has virtually no role to play other than how many microbes it supports. The pigments (particularly the inorganic ones), the extenders and the binders are virtually indestructible, and become part of the composition of the soil. It is easier to distribute these throughout a friable soil than on top of a heavy clay. In the latter case, the washings may create puddles that could possibly form some sort of film on eventual drying out. As far as the environment is concerned, the best thing to do is tip your washings down an inside sink; one that drains into the sewers, not into the stormwater system.

Q. I'm new to painting and find that I am constantly washing my brushes each time I take a break. Is there an easier way?

A. When you want to take time out, either for lunch or overnight, wrap your wet paintbrush in plastic food wrap and pop it in the freezer. When you are ready to paint again, simply unwrap it and the paint on the brush will still be moist and ready to go.

Q. Over the summer months, I was painting the inside of my house. It was very hot and the paint seemed to be drying faster than I could put it on. What do you recommend?

A. Hot weather can mean paint dries fast. We suggest you add Resene Hot Weather Additive to waterborne paints – it will help slow down the drying.

Q. I created a feature wall in my lounge and masked it off with masking tape to ensure straight lines, as had been suggested to me. When I came to take the tape off, it took some of the paint with it.

A. Masking tape is a great way to mask off the area you are painting so you don't accidentally paint adjacent surfaces. However, when you're using masking tape, you must remove it while the paint is still wet. Otherwise, the paint will form a bond with the tape and may get pulled off.

Q. I have an ugly laminate cupboard door that I have been trying to paint over, but the paint keeps lifting. Help!

A. Laminates tend to be very smooth and normal paint can have difficulty sticking. You need to use an adhesion promoter such as Resene Waterborne Smooth Surface Sealer first, then apply your paint. This is also useful if you wish to recoat other smooth surfaces such as tiles or doors.

Q. I am allergic to many chemicals used in common household detergents – will that stop me being able to paint my home?

A. Allergies do vary from person to person, so a material that may cause an allergic reaction in one person may have no effect on someone else. Resene makes three extra-low-odour products that you might like to try: Resene Ceiling Paint, Resene Zylone Sheen and Resene Zylone 20. Although these give off minimum paint odours, it is recommended that you do leave windows and doors open to allow the air to circulate, as this will help the paint to cure and odours to dissipate.

Q. We are planning to paint the outside of our previously stained timber weatherboard house black, but have been told that this may damage the timber. Is this true?

A. Timber is a natural material, and will therefore expand and contract more than some synthetics. True black has a very low reflectance value, which means it absorbs all heat and light. This puts a lot of stress on the surface and can cause warping. If you want a black finish on

timber weatherboards, you may be best to use Resene Woodsman tinted to Resene Crowshead. This is a black wood stain that still allows the natural timber grain to show through. New technology such as Linea, which looks like weatherboards, but is made from very different materials, can be painted black without fear of warping.

Q. Our timber deck gets very slippery in winter when it is wet. We'd like to repaint it as the current paint finish is very worn, but we don't want to end up with a deck that is slipperier.

A. Stained wood finishes are designed to penetrate into timber and therefore do not give any slip resistance benefits. If you opt for a solid colour finish, you could try Resene Non-Skid Deck and Path, which will provide good slip resistance. It will be a little more textured underfoot, but is comfortable to walk on with or without shoes.

Q. We went to buy paint for the outside of our house and were offered the choice between satin acrylic and semi-gloss acrylic. We weren't sure which to use and why – can you explain the difference?

A. Acrylic means they are waterborne, so brushes and rollers will wash out easily in water. Semi-gloss is a higher sheen finish than satin. Generally, semi-gloss finishes are easier to clean, but satin finishes are more forgiving if the surface has imperfections. So, if you are painting an exterior that's in good condition and relatively smooth, semi-gloss is ideal. If you are painting a rougher or damaged surface, the satin acrylic will help to give you a better looking finish.

Q. When a paint says it is washable, what does that mean?

A. Paints have varying levels of washability due to their different ingredients, so some stains are more easily washed off some paints than others, depending on the makeup of the stain and the paint. Washable generally means you can remove marks without damaging the surface, but some stains are impossible to remove, no matter how washable the paint. Even stains that seem similar, like beetroot and red wine, may actually mark quite differently. Most of the marks inside houses are caused by fingers around light switches and people scuffing walls. A product such as Resene Zylone SpaceCote is designed to make these very easy to remove without damaging the finish. Other products focus more on being washable for waterborne stains, which are considerably less common.

Q. If I am completely redecorating a room, including the furniture, what should I try to pick first?

A. In most cases, there will be an artwork or existing item you want to keep that you can use as the starting point. If, however, you are lucky enough to have a clean slate, the best idea is to pick the items that offer the fewest choices first, such as furniture and carpet, and then work curtains and paint into the scheme. There are thousands of paint colours available, so no matter what fixtures and accessories you pick, Resene staff can help you select a shade to complete the look or make up a new one for you.

Dear Habitat

Firstly, I write to thank you for the copy of your magazine, Habitat, which I know I shall go back to several times before parting with it. Secondly, I thought you may be interested in what my friends call my Wow wall! It is 100% Resene paints. Although it looks 3D, that is only an illusion...



Margaret Jones' 'Wow wall'.

We look forward to receiving your ideas and queries, and would particularly like to see any weird and wonderful ways you have used Resene paints. Also, if you've just completed a building or renovation project using Resene paints, do feel free to send us a picture. The best letter we get will win the writer a Get Decorating Kit from Resene.

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