

Renew your wood fence



Wash



Repair



Stain

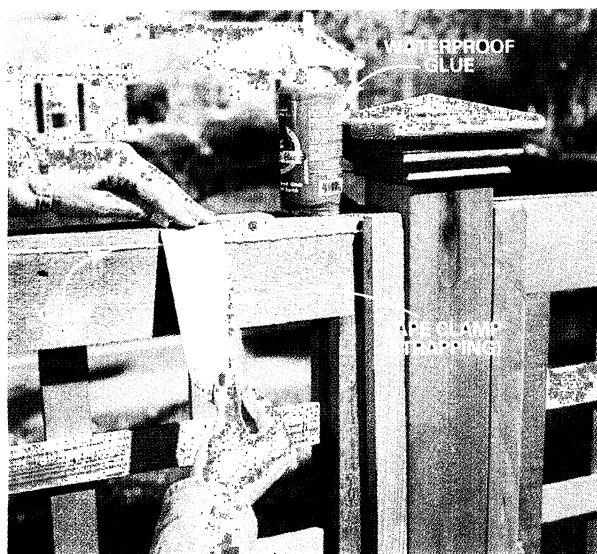
**Shabby to handsome
in three easy steps**

by Carl Hines

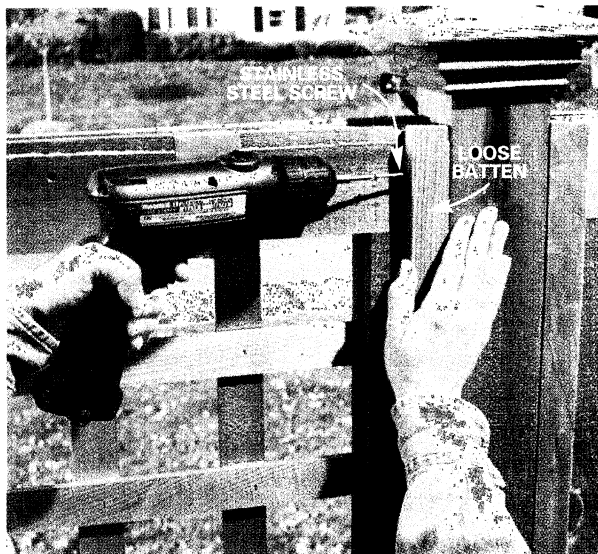
When do your cedar fence lose its rich, warm glow? Who invited that discolored, shadowy-looking impostor into the neighborhood? Don't worry—underneath that thin gray skin the glow still remains. All you have to do is remove the surface layer of aged wood cells to expose a fresh layer of wood. With a power washer, it's as easy as washing your car. Then apply an exterior wood oil stain to preserve this new layer of wood. It'll prolong the life of your fence to boot.

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3 **GLUE** split and broken pieces when the wood has dried for at least 24 hours. Apply waterproof glue and clamp or tape the pieces firmly together.



4 **DRIVE** weather-resistant or stainless steel screws to tighten loose boards. Recess the head 1/4 in. and fill with a light-colored caulk.

It's better to make two or three passes than to risk gouging the surface trying to accomplish this job in one pass. As you gain experience, you can switch to a 15-degree tip. This tip cuts more aggressively and works faster than the 25-degree tip.

Simple repairs add years to the life of your fence

With the fence clean, it's time to fix or replace damaged boards, refasten loose boards and countersink any protruding nails. Use waterproof glue (**Photo 3**) to repair any split and broken boards. Drive corrosion-resistant screws (**Photo 4**) instead of nails to pull loose pieces tightly together. If a gate is sagging, straighten it with a turnbuckle support (**Photo 5**). Also coat the posts (**Photo 6**) where they emerge from the ground or concrete with a wood preservative. This is the area that rots first.



5 **REALIGN** sagging gates with a turnbuckle. We spray-painted the shiny turnbuckle black to make it less conspicuous.

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6 BRUSH a wood preservative into the posts around the base to help prevent rot at this vulnerable area.

Stain makes the fence look brand new

To preserve the natural color of the wood, use an exterior semitransparent oil stain. It seals the wood while allowing the grain and color variations to show through. And its pigments add an overall color tone. Make sure the stain contains ultraviolet inhibitors, which will slow down bleaching by sunlight, and a mildewcide to slow fungal growth. Look for samples on cedar at the paint store, or bring in your own piece of wood to test. A test sample is the best way to ensure a satisfactory result.

Before applying the stain, be sure the fence is dry. Allow at least 24 hours. If it's cool and humid, allow another 24 hours.

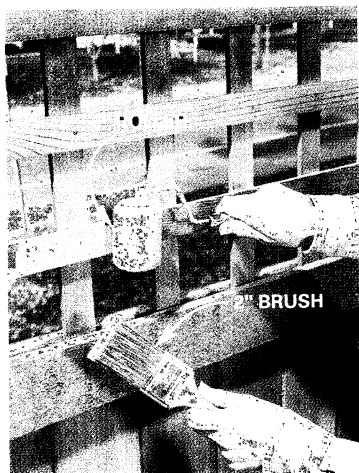
Use a paint roller with a "medium nap" cover (**Photo 7**) to apply a soaking coat to the wood. Let the wood absorb as much sealer as it can. Roll about a 3-ft. section of fence and then brush



7 ROLL into the dry wood a soaking coat of semitransparent stain. Coat about 3 ft. of fence, then proceed to the step shown in Photo 8.



8 BRUSH the stain (backbrush) into the wood grain and all corners and gaps. Brush out any runs or drips.



9 **WORK** the stain into small and tight areas with a trim roller and a 2-in. brush. One generous coat should be enough.

(Photo 8) the sealer into the wood. If the wood still appears dry, roll on additional sealer. Work the sealer into all recesses and corners. The roller applies the stain, but you need the brush to work it well into the wood's surface. Coat detailed areas with a trim roller and smaller brush (Photo 9). Keep wet edges to prevent lap marks.

Most semitransparent oil stains are guaranteed to last two to five years. (Solid-color stains last longer but are more difficult to renew.) Fences usually face severe weathering, so expect the finish to last no more than three years. Plan on recoating the fence within this time frame to keep your fence looking fresh. Before recoating, wash the fence with a garden hose sprayer and use a bristle brush on stubborn dirt deposits and stains. Let the fence dry and stain it using the same method.

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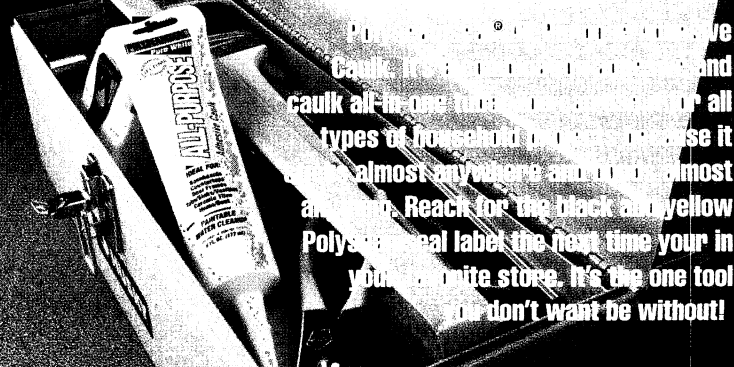
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