

## FACT SHEET

### TIMBER FENCES

Concern over our ability to sustain our natural resources, suggests that the timber used for this purpose should be preserved for as long as possible.

While it is possible to contribute to longer life in these structures by care in construction, the use of paint coatings on fences can create a pleasant environment and reduce the early replacement of these forest products.

The renewed interest in picket fences, even at some considerable cost, has given rise to very attractive decoration on this highly visible area of a property. Consider this area as part of your overall colour planning and design.

Overlapping, and end-grain areas of timber, in both types of fences, is usually neglected as a source of decay. Time spent in painting these areas, even though they do not play a visible part in decoration, will yield a longer life by excluding much of the moisture which is responsible for severe rotting.

The sharp edges of the pickets are more likely to have a very low thickness of paint; so regular repaint touch up will prove worthwhile in preventing cracks appearing and allowing moisture to enter and leave the timber.

Fence stains represent a simple means of colouring the timber, at low cost, and the

use of iron oxide pigments to give a range of yellows, reds, and browns, has satisfied the initial colour needs of the market, particularly on rough sawn timbers.

The oil/solvent types of stains penetrate the rough timber surfaces and provide uniform colour with reasonable coverage, but the colour is eroded quickly and little protection is offered to the timber against moisture. The durability of these products and their ability to give lengthy preservation has not been commendable.

Water-based stains are also available. They are durable and have lower levels of VOC, which is better for the environment.

Application of conventional paints to picket fences will provide a wider range of colours at some cost penalty. Because of their ability to apply thicker coatings than stains, these products will yield longer periods in between repaints. Water-thinned acrylic finishes have the ability to be applied directly to timber without the need for separate coats of oil-based primer, making them ideal for decorative fence painting. They have a low degree of penetration into the timber which assists in building a high coating thickness and longer protective life. Choices of high and low gloss levels are available to suit your taste.