

## How to Stain Your Cedar Shed

So you have decided to stain your New Western Red Cedar Shed from *Outdoor Living Today.com*. Western Red Cedar has a reputation for holding finish exceptionally well, and for good reason too. After all, Western Red Cedar is pitch and resin-free, which means there's nothing to interfere with the bonding of your finish. Here are a few tips to help your shed stay beautiful for many years to come.

### ***After your Shed arrives***

The best time to stain western red cedar is before installation. Not only does this allow you to work in a safe, comfortable position it has the added benefit of allowing you to apply a finish to all sides of your wood before installing it, thus 'protecting' every surface of you shed.

Store it in a dry place, off the ground. Your shed, from *Outdoor Living Today.com*, uses top quality, smooth finished Western Red Cedar that has been kiln dried to below 15% moisture. This is the optimal level of moisture to accept your finish. If left unfinished and exposed to the elements (even for just a few weeks), Cedar's ability to hold your stain stains will be compromised, so don't delay, and keep it out of the elements!

### ***Stain choice***

Walk into any home do-it-yourself paint and supply store and you're bound to be inundated with finish-stains. These products provide protection and also dress up the wood's surface, enhancing cedar's natural colors and textures or changing its face altogether. Three common choices are solid-colour stains, semi-transparent stains, and transparent stains.

Solid-colour stains act as a barrier between the elements and the wood, forming a film around the wood. Semi-transparent stains are ideal when you want to maintain western red cedar's natural finish without weathering. Semi-transparent stains penetrate the wood's pores, to varying degrees based on product. Transparent stains enhance the wood's colour and act as an invisible protectant.

We here at *Outdoor Living Today.com* have experimented with many name brands, and in our opinion, a couple have stood out: Cabot Stain and Sikken's.

- Cabot's Wood Toned Deck and Siding Stain in Cedar or Natural, and
- Sikken's Cetol SRD (Siding, Deck and Rails) in Cedar or Natural.

Both of these companies offer an opaque stain as well if your desire is to 'colour' your shed.

### ***Test!***

Before you start applying your stain to the entire shed, test your stain choice to make sure it has the desired effect. The bottom skirting supplied with your shed a great opportunity to do this. Test various stains and colors on the *inside* of the skirting. These won't be

seen when the assembly is complete, and will help you decide on your stain choice a lot more definitively than some arbitrary ‘colour guide’ on a sample rack.

### ***Brush or Rag?***

While it is easier to apply stain with a rag over large, smooth surfaces, only the brush will work effectively on the siding and end grains of trim pieces. Using a brush will give you the most control. Brush application (natural bristle) is the preferred method because it works the stain into the wood fibers and cells more effectively. To avoid lap marks, make sure that the leading edge is kept wet and that the wet stain is brushed into the wood. A very good method is to brush the stain over an area, and then follow up with a rag to catch any puddles or drips. Any stain left to sit on a surface will soak in more than surrounding areas and appear darker. Work in small manageable areas. Try this technique: brush with one hand, and keep the rag in the other. Brush an area with the stain, and follow up with the rag if there are drips and puddles. It won’t take long until you have developed a rhythm and the job will be done in no time.

While stain brands recommend a drying time of 12 to 24 hours, allowing the cedar to dry between 24 and 48 hours ensures that it is completely dry before you handle it for assembly.

There’s always the low-maintenance option of letting your western red cedar outdoor projects weather to a beautiful silver grey. But if that doesn’t suit your personal palette, follow these tips for a beautiful finish that will last for many years!

Enjoy your Shed from Outdoor Living Today.com!

