

DECK TREATMENTS

Best across the board

A good deck treatment will save you the trouble of buying and applying a fresh coat every year. We've found that opaque ones generally last longest.

To judge treatments, we built a deck behind our Yonkers, N.Y., testing facility where some 500 pieces of pressure-treated lumber, coated with the various products, bake in the summer sun, chill under the winter snow, and generally put up with whatever nature dishes out.

After three years, the best treatments in our Ratings remain close to their original color, protect the wood from cracking, pick up only a small amount of dirt, and prevent mildew growth. The two opaque treatments atop the Ratings kept up a very good appearance after three years.

The deck treatments in our Ratings were tested on CCA (chromated copper arsenate) lumber, a type no longer made for residential applications because of safety concerns but still in wide use. We have also begun to test on ACQ and copper azole lumber, alternatives to CCA.

One-year results for some newer treatments are available at Consumer Reports.org. While it's too early to judge those treatments, Flood Solid Color Deck & Siding Stain has been a standout so far.



Ratings deck treatments

• Availability Most products in stores through December 2006.

● Excellent
◐ Very good
○ Good
◑ Fair
● Poor

In performance order. Blue key numbers indicate Quick Picks. Products with equal scores are listed alphabetically.

Key number	Product	Price	Type	Overall score	Appearance			Resists				
					1 yr.	2 yr.	3 yr.	Dirt	Color change	Mildew	Cracking	
1	Cabot Decking Stain 1480	\$29	opaque	81	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2	Cabot Solid Color 1880	30	opaque	67	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3	Wolman DuraStain 18146	23	semi	61	◐	◐	○	●	●	●	●	●
4	Benjamin Moore Acrylic Solid Deck Stain	33	opaque	58	◐	◐	○	●	●	●	●	●
5	Akzo Nobel Sikkens Cetol SRD 1708902	27	semi	53	●	◐	◑	●	●	●	●	●
6	McCloskey Storm Coat 7953	16	opaque	52	◐	○	○	●	●	●	●	●
7	Olympic WaterGuard 55560	13	clear	51	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●
8	Benjamin Moore Moorwood Alykd 099	30	semi	45	●	○	◑	●	●	●	●	●
9	Pratt & Lambert StainShield Oil S1697	24	semi	41	○	○	◑	●	●	●	●	●
10	Wolman RainCoat Tinted Water Repellent 12346	18	semi	41	○	○	◑	●	●	●	●	●
11	Olympic Water Repellent Solid Color 53060	22	opaque	38	○	○	◑	●	●	●	●	●
12	McCloskey MultiUse	15	opaque	37	◐	○	◑	●	●	●	●	●
13	Glidden Endurance Deck Sealer EN 2490	21	clear	25	◐	◑	◑	●	●	●	●	●
14	Olympic Water Repellent 53106	21	semi	25	○	◑	◑	●	●	●	●	●
15	Benjamin Moore Moorwood C070	29	semi	22	○	◑	◑	●	●	●	●	●
16	Amteco TWP 101	25	semi	19	○	◑	◑	●	●	●	●	●
17	McCloskey Storm Coat 7921	15	semi	19	○	◑	◑	●	●	●	●	●
18	Benjamin Moore Moorwood 076	33	clear	13	◑	◑	◑	●	●	●	●	●
19	Wolman RainCoat Clear Water Repellent 12366	18	clear	13	◑	◑	◑	●	●	●	●	●
20	McCloskey Storm Coat 7941	15	semi	12	◑	◑	◑	●	●	●	●	●

CR Quick Recommendations

QUICK PICKS

Best for most decks:

- 1, 2 Cabot \$29, \$30
- 3 Wolman \$23

As we noted last year, the Cabots are both outstanding opaque treatments. (1) is an alkyd that cleans up with solvent; (2), a latex that cleans up with water. The Wolman is the best semitransparent stain for wood worth showing off; it's an alkyd but cleans up with water.

If the natural look counts most:

- 7 Olympic \$13

This is the only good choice among the clear deck treatments we tested. It's a latex and cleans up with water.

Guide to the Ratings

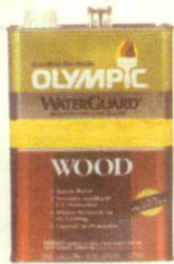
Overall score reflects a weighted average of performance over the duration of the tests. **Type** shows whether a treatment covers wood grain (opaque or solid), shows some grain (semitransparent), or shows lots of grain without tinting (clear). Label descriptions may differ from ours. **Appearance** is judged over time; testing is stopped when appearance falls to fair or poor, at which point treatment needs to be reapplied. **Resists dirt** shows products that collect little dirt. **Resists color change** shows which fade or change color the least. **Resists mildew** shows which minimize mildew buildup. **Resists cracking** shows which are best at preventing cracks in the pressure-treated boards we used. **Price** is approximate retail per gallon.



1 Cabot



2 Wolman



3 Olympic

CR Quick Recommendations

The highest-rated products hold up well for a full three years. You can expect the best of them to have picked up only a little dirt, remain close to their original color, and protect the wood from cracking. The worst become unsightly and compromise protection in as little as a year.

The **Ratings** ranks products strictly by performance. It includes products that held up for our entire three-year testing cycle and those that deteriorated so much during their first years of exposure that we ceased testing. We also present preliminary results for some products—mainly opaque treatments—that are still in testing because they are new or reformulated. Seek out the promising treatments if you can't find fully tested products in stores. And avoid the less-promising treatments, which have already fallen behind the best fully tested products. The **Quick Picks**, below, consider both test results and factors we don't rate, including value.

QUICK PICKS

Best for most decks:

- 1 Cabot, \$24
- 2 Wolman, \$24

The opaque Cabot (1) still looks very good after four years, with little color change or mildew but some dirt buildup. If you can't find this Cabot, a brandmate (17) is faring comparably after two years.

For wood worth showing off, the semi-transparent Wolman (2) is a better choice, though you may need to reapply it a year or so earlier than the Cabot (1).

If the natural look counts most:

- 3 Olympic Water Guard, \$12

This is the only good choice among clear deck treatments. Just don't expect top-notch performance.

Ratings deck treatments

• Availability Most products at stores through 2003.

● Excellent
 ● Very good
 ○ Good
 ○ Fair
 ● Poor

In performance order. **Blue** key numbers indicate Quick Picks; see box at left.

Key number	Product	Price	Type	Overall score	Appearance			Resists				
					After 1 year	After 2 years	After 3 years	Dirt	Color change	Cracking	Mildew	
APPEARANCE HELD UP Fully tested.												
1	Cabot Decking Stain 1480	\$24	opaque	95	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2	Wolman Durastain	24	semi.	90	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●
3	Olympic Water Guard 57560	12	clear	85	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4	Akzo Nobel Sikkens Cetol SRD	27	semi.	80	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5	Sherwin-Williams UV Sunblock	20	semi.	75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6	Benjamin Moore Moorwood Alkyd	26	semi.	70	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
7	True Value Woodsman UV	16	semi.	65	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
8	Penofin Penetrating Oil Finish	25	semi.	60	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
9	Pratt & Lambert Stainshield Oil	20	semi.	55	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
10	Wolman Rain Coat with Natural Wood Toner	16	semi.	50	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
APPEARANCE DETERIORATED Testing ended early.												
11	Sherwin-Williams 158-0448	20	semi.	45	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●
12	Glidden Endurance Deck Sealer	19	clear	40	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●
13	Benjamin Moore Moorwood #076	25	clear	35	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14	McCloskey Man O' War 7941	13	semi.	30	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15	Wolman Rain Coat with Water Repellent	16	clear	25	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
16	Ace Wood Royal	17	semi.	20	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
INITIALLY PROMISING Still under test, so no overall score.												
17	Cabot Solid Color 1880	29	opaque		●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●
18	Benjamin Moore Moorwood #065	25	opaque		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
19	Behr Deck Plus (Home Depot)	20	opaque		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
20	McCloskey Man O' War 7953	14	opaque		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
21	Valspar Severe Weather 104303	17	opaque		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
LESS PROMISING Still under test, so no overall score.												
22	Olympic Solid Color 53060	18	opaque		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
23	McCloskey Man O' War 7961	13	semi.		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
24	Olympic Water Repellent 53106	18	semi.		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
25	Amteco TWP 101	28	semi.		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
26	Benjamin Moore Moorwood #070	25	semi.		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score reflects a weighted average of performance over the duration of the tests (3 years for products in the top group, 1 or 2 years for the others). The score is based on the appearance of each product as well as cracking of the boards to which it was applied. **Type** is our description of whether a treatment covers wood grain (opaque), shows some grain (semitransparent), or shows lots of grain (clear). **Appearance** shows how each product's appearance deteriorates over time. **Resists dirt** highlights products that accumulate little dirt. **Resists color change** shows which products fade or change color the least in sunlight. **Resists cracking** shows which deck treatments are best at preventing the southern yellow pine boards we used from developing cracks or splits. **Resists mildew** shows which minimize the buildup of mildew. **Price** is the approximate retail.