

# TAKING CARE OF YOUR STUCCO

Like any building material, stucco needs occasional care to keep its appearance fresh and clean. Here are a few simple things you can and should do to keep it looking its best:

## What You Should Do...

Be sure to keep irrigation systems directed away from your stucco wall. Over time, sprinkler systems could stain your wall and might cause mildew (a fungus), or efflorescence (a whitish powdery "bloom") to form.

**Wash** your exterior stucco a few times a year to keep its surface clean and its color bright. Here's how:

- 1** Pre-Wet: Use a garden hose with a jet nozzle to pre-wet the wall over its entire surface. Pre-wetting will overcome absorption, preventing the stucco finish from absorbing dirty wash water. Set your hose nozzle to a medium to coarse spray. Start at the bottom and wet the surface all the way to the top.
- 2** Wash: When the surface has been pre-wet, adjust the hose nozzle to a "pressure stream" and direct the stream of water against the wall to loosen dirt and dust. This time, start at the top and work down to the bottom. "Caked-on" dirt, if present might require loosening with a brush. To avoid eroding some finishes, do NOT hold the nozzle too close to the surface
- 3** Use Cleanser if Necessary: Sometimes, a mild cleanser might be needed to remove stains. We recommend a mild solution of trisodium phosphate, also known as "TSP," available from most paint and/or hardware stores. If you use a different product, be sure it is water-soluble (dissolves completely in water) and is safe for portland cement, lime and oxide pigment colors. Do NOT use soap or dish washing liquid. Always test your cleaning solution on a small, inconspicuous area first to be sure it is safe for your wall.
- 4** Rinse: Flush the wall thoroughly with clean water to remove loosened dirt and cleansers.

**If you find mildew:** Wash the affected area with a mild solution of household bleach such as Clorox™. Always observe proper safety precautions when using any chemical or cleanser. Never allow children access to household chemicals or cleansers.

**If you find efflorescence:** Spray the affected area with white vinegar. This should neutralize the alkaline efflorescence. After a few minutes -- and before the vinegar dries -- rinse the area with clean water. Efflorescence is usually caused by a combination of cool weather and excessive moisture.

## What You Should Not Do...

NEVER use harsh detergents or cleansers that can damage portland cement, lime or oxide pigment colors.

NEVER hold the hose nozzle too close to the stucco surface. A forceful, high-pressure jet of water held too close could damage certain stucco finishes.

## Related Helpful Products...

Eventually every homeowner has to make a small repair or "spruce up" an aging wall. Here are some specialty products owners of stucco homes might find useful.

- To repair chipped corners and small spalls use LaHabra Exterior Color Coat Patch. The Patch material is available in LaHabra's 30 standard colors. If you do not have a LaHabra standard color on your home: choose the standard color that is the closest match to your stucco. After the patch has dried, use LaHabra Fog Coat in the color that was applied to your home.
- To render stucco surfaces water-repellent and improve stain resistance use LaHabra Pro-Tect, a clear, colorless liquid formulated to protect above ground stucco, masonry and mature concrete from water.
- To renew older, faded stucco surfaces or to repair stubborn stains on newer surfaces, use LaHabra Fog Coat. This is a mineral-based spray finish material similar to stucco without the added maintenance demands of conventional paints on stucco finishes.

For the name of a nearby supplier of any of these products or for the name of a qualified stucco contractor in your area contact LaHabra at 714-778-2266.