

MSU Extension Publication Archive

Archive copy of publication, do not use for current recommendations. Up-to-date information about many topics can be obtained from your local Extension office.

Interior Painting
Michigan State University
Cooperative Extension Service
(N.D.)
4 pages

The PDF file was provided courtesy of the Michigan State University Library

Scroll down to view the publication.



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Departments of
Human Environment and Design
Agricultural Engineering
Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension Bulletin E-817

INTERIOR PAINTING

FILE COPY
Do Not Remove

SELECTING PAINT

Before buying paint, consider the following:

- Kind and condition of surface
- Use of the room
- Types of paint available and their characteristics
- Amount of paint needed
- Color you want

A variety of paint is on the market. Each paint has specific uses, characteristics and qualities. Select paint from a reputable manufacturer and a reputable dealer. For maximum performance, follow manufacturer's directions, found on the label, about use, characteristics, care and application.

Kind and Condition of Surfaces

Different surfaces have different painting problems. For example, cement and plaster are alkaline and may cause hot spots or burn some paints. Also, moisture seeps through masonry. Metal corrodes and rusts unless protected with a primer. Paint made for a specific surface can prevent disappointment.

Use of Rooms

Kitchens, bathrooms, utility rooms and hallways require more scrubbing than other areas, such as a living room, because of their heavy use. Select paint according to a room's use.

Paint Characteristics

No single best, all-purpose paint exists. Select a paint that fits the job. Some things to consider are:

- Does it dry to a smooth, even finish? Can it be re-touched?
- Is it highly washable for areas that are scrubbed often?
- Is it resistant to water spotting? (Especially important around sinks and bathtubs.)
- Is drying time long or short?

— What serviceability can you expect under normal use? Two years? Three years?

— Can it be used as a self-primer?

Two kinds are best for interior painting:

LATEX — water-base paints

ALKYD — oil-base paints

Water-base paint comes in semigloss (medium shine) and flat (no shine) finishes. Choose latex, water-base paint if you want a paint that is:

- Easy to apply
- Easy to clean up (after painting)
- Easy to touch up
- Quick drying
- Non-flammable

Oil-base paint comes in the following finishes: Gloss (high shine); semigloss (medium shine); eggshell (low shine); flat (no shine). Choose an alkyd, oil-base paint if you want a paint that:

- Is easy to put on
- Is tough to chip or mar
- Can be scrubbed
- Does the best job of covering wall imperfections
- Covers the most area per gallon
- Is low in cost and high in performance

How Much Paint?

The dealer will need to know:

- Length and width of the room
- Height of the ceiling
- Number of doors and windows
- Everything you plan to paint
- Number of coats of paint

Buy enough paint to complete the job, especially if you are having the colors mixed. The second mixing may not match exactly. Whether you use one or more coats depends on the type and color of paint you use, the condition of the walls and the previous color you are covering. Rely on your paint dealer to help you decide how much paint you need.

Color

Color is a personal choice. Select a color that you will enjoy for a long time and one that will enhance your home decor. In selecting colors from paint chips, view them in the same kind of light used in the room to be painted. Qualities of light will change the color's appearance.

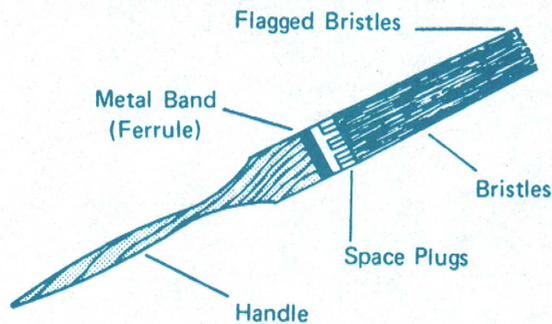
The following color characteristics will help you select paint colors:

- Light colors in a small room can create an impression of larger size.
- Warm reds and yellows will add cheer to rooms that have no windows or face north.
- Background colors of soft greens, greys or blues will cool down rooms with much sunlight or with south west exposures.
- Dark or intense colors make rooms appear smaller.
- Small rooms seem larger when doors, window frames and other wood trim are painted to match the wall color.
- To visually lower a high ceiling, paint deeper color than the walls.
- Consider building a color scheme around a painting, a fabric or a colorful rug that pleases you.
- Color in wall-size amounts looks more intense than on a small sample chip. Select a paint color lighter than you think you want, so the final results will be more to your liking.

BRUSHES AND ROLLERS

Which Size Brush?

Most household paint jobs can be done with one of the following:



- 4-inch brush for large, flat surfaces (floors, walls and exterior siding).
- angled, sash brush for windows, frames, moldings and other narrow surfaces.
- 2-inch brush with chiseled edge for enamel and varnish.
- 1 to 1½-inch brush for small jobs, toys, furniture and hard-to-reach places.

Choose the Right Roller

Paint rollers save time and aid in achieving a uniform finish. Although rollers are used primarily for interior

walls and ceilings, their use outdoors for lap and vertical siding is increasing. Rollers also are ideal for smooth masonry.

Natural or Synthetic Bristles?

Natural bristle is used primarily for varnish or alkyd or oil-base paints. Never use natural bristle brushes for latex or water-thinned paints because the bristles absorb water and swell.

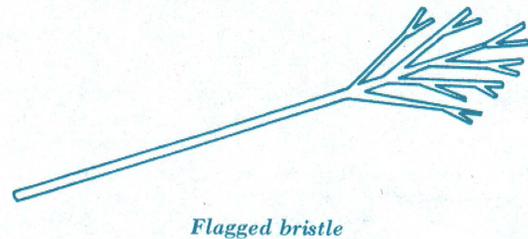
Synthetic bristles usually are made of nylon or polyester fiber and are used to apply latex, alkyd or oil-base paints. They generally wear longer than natural bristle brushes. Although synthetic bristle brushes are used for almost any paint project, they do not give best results with varnishes.

Choose a Quality Brush

There is a marked difference between good quality brushes and rollers and less expensive, "economy" brushes and rollers. Good quality brushes give a faster, better and neater appearing paint job. Here are some things to consider when selecting a paint brush.

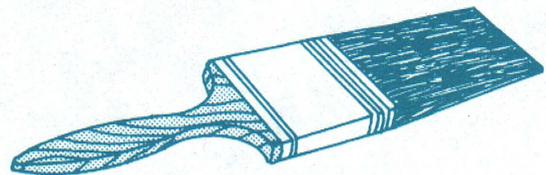
Fullness of bristles — Squeeze bristles gently; they should feel full and spongy. Poke your fingers into the bristles on the innermost part to determine fullness. A full bristle brush holds more paint for a faster job.

Flagged bristles — Brush tips should have a number of fine, branchlike ends. These split ends signify a quality brush that will hold a good amount of paint and cover the surface in fewer passes.



Bristle length — Variance in bristle length permits a larger brush load than when all ends are cut even. Also, as the tip of the brush wears out, new bristles replace the worn ones.

Tapered bristles — See if the base end of the bristles fastened by the metal band is somewhat thicker than the tip end; you'll get a more satisfactory paint job if the bristles taper in toward the tip.



Consider the following points when selecting a roller:

Two popular sizes are 7-inch and 9-inch. Special-application trim rollers (usually 3 inches wide) and corner rollers are also available. Most paint trays are designed for a roller up to 9 inches wide. Roller frames have either a compression-type cage or a roller cover attached with an end cap held by a wing nut. Compression frames permit easier and faster roller-cover mounting or removal. The roller-cover core should be constructed of plastic-impregnated cardboard to resist softening and warping. If you apply floor or ceiling paint with a roller, be sure the frame handle has a threaded end where you can add an extension pole.

Roller covers are available in either natural or synthetic fibers.

Natural fiber covers, (wool or mohair) usually are recommended for oil-base paints, varnish and stains or similar finishes. Do not use lambs wool with water-base paints.

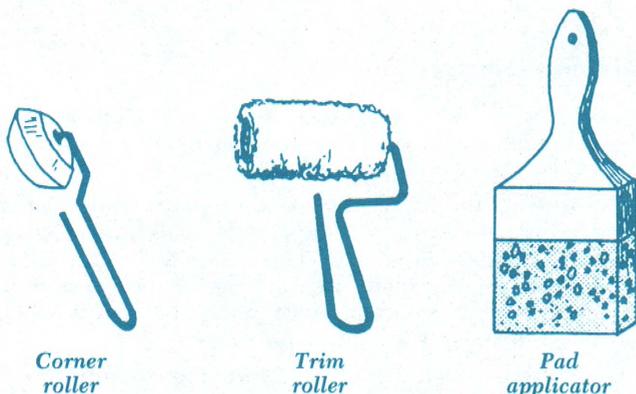
Synthetic-fiber covers containing Dynel or rayon are recommended for latex paints.

Roller-Cover Pile	Application
Standard = 1/4"	Most ceiling, wall or floor work
High = 3/4" or 1 1/4"	Exceptionally rough surfaces such as stucco, masonry, brick and wire
Stipple	For a stipple-textured finish or for rolling on mastic materials

Corner rollers are 3-inch diameter, round rollers with a wedge-shaped edge made from soft polyurethane foam to conform to corner irregularities.

Trim rollers, 3-inches wide with functionally shaped wire handles, are made from all-purpose mohair fabric for use on sashes, screens, woodwork, window trim, cutting-in and other hard-to-reach areas.

Pad applicators give the speed of rollers and the smooth finish of brushes. They are made of foam for use on smooth surfaces.



Care of Brush or Roller

A brush or roller is more easily cleaned and better preserved if cleaned immediately after use. If this is impossible, soak it in water if you used water-base paint. Use turpentine or mineral spirits for oil-base paint.

If you used an oil-base paint:

- Role or brush out excess paint from the brush or roller.
- Remove the roller from its handle and wash in the correct solvent. Wash until no more paint comes out. Wash a brush the same way. Save the solvent. The paint will go to the bottom, and you can use the top layer for washing other brushes or rollers.
- Wring out excess liquid from the roller by squeezing the fibers between your fingers. Remove excess from the brush by using painting motions on newspapers.
- Clean with powdered soap, liquid detergent or cleaning powder rubbed into bristles. Rinse in warm water until all soap or detergent is removed.
- Allow the brush or roller to dry. Then wrap the brush in foil and store on its side or hang it. **Hang the roller; do not lay it on end or nap.**

If you used a water-base paint:

- Role or brush out excess paint from the brush or roller.
- Wash by rubbing powdered soap, liquid detergent or cleaning powder into the pad or bristles. Rinse in warm water until all soap or detergent is removed.
- Rinse a second time in warm water.
- Allow the brush or roller to dry. Then wrap brush in foil and store it on its side or hang. **Hang the roller; do not lay it on end or nap.**

If the brush or roller must be left for a time while you are painting, cover it tightly with aluminum foil. A good brush and roller are worth caring for!

PAINTING WALLS AND CEILINGS

Getting Ready to Paint

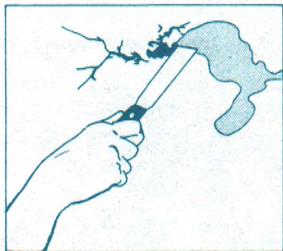
Cover floor and furniture — Cover furniture and floor coverings with plastic drop cloths. Remove pictures, mirrors, drapes, switch plates and all hardware. Loosen lighting fixtures or cover with masking tape. These may be replaced the same day.

Use strips of masking tape to fasten screws to the fixtures they go with. Identify each piece by its location with felt-tip marker.

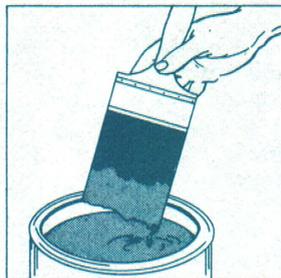
Patch cracks — Before painting, fill cracks and nail holes with spackling compound or plaster. Use spackling materials for small hairline cracks. Smooth before it completely dries. Apply compound with a putty knife, an old kitchen knife or your finger. When dry, sand smooth until even with the wall. Paint over patches before applying the finish coat or they will show through your one or two coats of paint. If you use ready-mixed spackling compounds with a vinyl base, omit a primer on the cracks. Read the directions on spackling compounds to see which product allows omitting the primer coat. Use patching plaster for larger cracks. Follow manufacturer's directions. Thoroughly sand all patches before painting.

Peeling walls and ceiling — Remove loose or peeling paint. Blend edges by sanding. Wash with detergent and water, rinse well, let dry and spot-prime with wall primer and sealer. Prime entire wall or ceiling with wall primer or sealer before finishing with paint.

Wallpaper — To assure the finest job possible, remove old wallpaper. Painting over wallpaper makes it much



Patching a crack



Dipping the brush



Applying paint

harder to remove. When all paper is removed, wash wall thoroughly with hot soapy water, rinse well, let dry and follow directions for bare wall exposed.

If you paint over wallpaper, the paper must be firm and even. Paste down all loose sections. Metallic colors such as silver or gold "bleed" (show through wall paint). Do not paint over them. Check other colors by wiping with a damp white cloth to see if the color comes off.

Cleaning walls and ceiling — Dust the walls. If necessary, wash walls to remove dirt and grease. Remove mildew stains and kill spores by washing the wall with any household bleach or cleaner.

Glossy surfaces — Wash glossy surfaces such as enamel or varnish with a strong detergent solution and rinse well.

Wood surfaces — Scrape any loose paint or varnish, then sand smooth and remove dust. Apply primer, primer-sealer or undercoat if needed, following manufacturer's directions. When dry, sand lightly, dust thoroughly and apply primer before finish coat. Do all sanding with the grain of the wood.

Read Label, Mix Paint

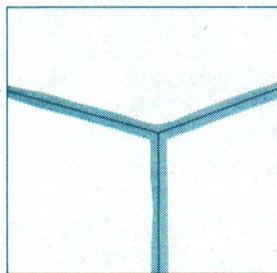
Read manufacturer's directions for mixing instructions. Most paints must be mixed well; however, some others should not be mixed.

If the paint needs mixing, have your paint dealer mix it on his machine when you buy the paint. Before painting, check the paint to see if it is well mixed. Stir with a paddle to see if the heavy pigment has settled to the bottom of the can. If so, pour most of the liquid into another can. Stir the thick part until smooth. Do not stir in a circular motion; stir from the bottom of the can to the top. Add a little of the liquid you poured off and stir. Repeat until evenly mixed. Thin only under special conditions. Thin water-base paints with water and oil-base paints with mineral spirits or thinner.

How to use a brush — Dip the brush down into the container to about one-third or one-half the length of the bristles. Slap sides of the bristles gently against the inside of the can. Then apply to the wall.

Hold brush comfortably near the base of handle and exert light pressure with your fingertips. Unload the brush with sweeping, crescent-shaped strokes in a small square area. Then finish-stroke all the same direction for uniform appearance. Always finish-stroke into the previously painted area, not out to the unpainted area.

Cutting an edge — If woodwork and walls are to be painted, enamel the woodwork first. Then apply a strip of paint around edges of woodwork, where wall and ceiling meet and down wall corners.



Apply strip of paint to corners and ceiling



Use "V" stroke with roller

Where to start — If ceilings and walls are to be painted, do the ceiling first.

How to fill a roller — Roll the roller slowly into well or lower end of tray. Roll back and forth until roller is well covered with paint. Roll back onto ridges in slanted upper portion of tray and lightly roll back and forth to remove excess paint.

Ceilings — Use a ladder or long-handled roller to paint ceilings. Always start in a corner and work down the width of the room. Paint as wide a strip as possible. Avoid spinning roller by going too fast.

How to use a roller — Paint a large "V" or "W" in a 2- to 3-foot-wide area of wall. Then roll crosswise to spread paint evenly; finish with light up-and-down strokes. Do not move roller too quickly because it will spray droplets of paint everywhere.

Painting walls — Start in one corner. Paint from dry area into wet area.

Helpful Hints

— If a large area of spackling-compound wall repairs has been sanded, clean with a vacuum cleaner or a dampened rag. Considerable dust can be generated.

— If using the handy, inexpensive plastic drop cloths, limit their use to furniture. Paint spills on plastic sheets are too easily tracked around the house, and the plastic sticks to shoe soles, especially rubber ones. Paper, canvas or other fabric drop cloths are most practical on floors or use several thicknesses of newspaper.

— Mask baseboards before painting, or use a piece of galvanized metal or aluminum with a straight edge to protect wall-to-wall carpet.

Touching up — If you missed a spot with a roller, go over the spot with very light, slow strokes. If you were brushing, use the tip of the brush to cover the missed area.

The information in this leaflet is adapted from bulletins developed by Extension Housing and Home Furnishings Specialists at Texas A&M University.