

# **Dow Corning: Five Tips to Spruce Up for Summer**

## **Selecting the Right Products Can Extend Your Home's Life, Preserve Beauty, Add Comfort**

### **Protect Decks and Fences from Elements**

Home improvement experts recommend regularly sealing wood decks and fences to protect from water and ultraviolet rays, which can cause wood to rot, warp, stain and decay.

"Silicone blends are an ideal choice because they allow wood products to breathe while also creating a physical barrier to water," said Jennifer Middleton of Dow Corning Construction Chemicals marketing. "They have a blend of chemicals that work specifically to protect the natural grain and appearance of wood to protect against moisture and UV. In addition, water-based silicone sealants are easy to dilute and use."

Be aware that some do-it-yourself products contain petroleum jelly or paraffin, which offer minimal water protection and limited UV protection. In addition, these products may not penetrate wood well and evaporate quickly, which limits their effectiveness.

Water repellents should be applied to a clean, dry, power-washed surface that is free from oil, dirt, grease, or any other coating.

### **Keep Grills Cooking Cleanly**

To keep a gas or charcoal grill working efficiently and looking new, wash it once a month with soap and warm water or a non-abrasive household cleanser. Spraying a small amount of silicone lubricant on the housing will keep it shining. Also, cover the grill when it is not in use.

For handling pans and food too large for tongs, a new generation of silicone oven mitts is ideal. They are heat-resistant, rinse clean, and feature gripping surfaces that prevent slippage.

### **Seal Air-leaks to Reduce Energy Costs**

While most people worry about winter heating bills, summer air conditioning costs can add up quickly as well. Summer is a great time to check for air leaks, which can increase air conditioning costs and reduce comfort dramatically - and sealing leaks will also help keep heating bills in check next winter. Sealing leaks and holes may also keep unwanted pests out of your house.

Besides areas around windows and doors, air leaks often occur in the attic where the walls meet the attic floors, the soffits and other dropped-ceiling areas, and behind attic kneewalls; in basements along the top of the wall where the concrete or brick comes into contact with wood; through recessed lighting, dryer, bathroom and kitchen fan vents, outdoor faucets, and even cable TV wiring outlets. Many times, these leaks can be fixed easily with sealants that commonly come in squeeze tubes, pressurized cans, or cartridges designed for dispensing guns.

Sealants come in three basic types: silicone, butyl and latex. Silicone is best for sealing metal, glass, tile and other smooth, non-porous surfaces. Of the three, it is the most flexible and shrinks the least. Silicone is especially well-suited for sealing dissimilar materials.

"Silicone is easy to use and effective at sealing leaks, and when combined with the right amount of insulation, can save up to 10 percent on energy bills, as well as keep you and your family comfortable," said Erin Zimmer, Dow Corning Weatherproofing Products marketing manager.

### Quiet Squeaking Doors

Because entry doors, sliding glass doors and garage doors are exposed to weather and heavy wear, they are prone to developing squeaks, which are very easy to fix by applying a light coating of silicone spray on hinges, rollers and guides. Silicone lubricants are also effective on gate and fence hinges, pet doors, and garage doors.

### Fill Cracks in Sidewalks, Driveways

Just as potholes appear in roads from constant freezing and thawing, asphalt and concrete sidewalks and driveways can develop cracks, which could lead to water damage around the home if not repaired. Fill cracks with a concrete crack filler or silicone caulk to keep moisture from accumulating.