

What's the green stuff on my siding?

An Advisory Circular from the LSA ECC

2019-1

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The ECC has observed some homes within LSA that are "suffering" from the green stain and offer this Circular with the intent to advise LSA members about the condition and probable solutions.

So, what is that green stuff appearing on the home's siding? They are usually the result of mold, mildew, algae or moss whose growth is encouraged by moisture. Much of it is found on a home's north side and/or in areas where the Sun does not shine upon the home. These stains occur naturally over time.

When house siding begins to turn green, it diminishes the exterior appearance of the home and contributes to making the neighborhood look a little less attractive.

Fortunately, siding can be cleaned to remove not only green stains, but other dirt and stains that may be taking over the homes' exterior. It is best to clean the entire side-surface rather than just the green-stained area (spot-cleaning). Spot-cleaning will leave a clean area that will contrast with the non-cleaned area creating an uneven appearance over the entire home.

According to the Vinyl Siding Institute's web site, "Unlike other exterior cladding products, vinyl siding will never need painting or caulking, and can be cleaned with mild soap and water from a garden hose." To prevent streaking, start at the bottom and work up towards the top of the house. When cleaning vinyl siding, remember to thoroughly rinse away any residue as you go, top down.

Pressure washing can absolutely damage vinyl siding **if done incorrectly**. Pressure washing really is not good to use on any kind of soft surface, like window screens, for example. Vinyl siding is a hard surface, but it's not as hard as, say, brick. The key to pressure washing the vinyl siding is the amount of pressure, type spray nozzle being used, closeness and angle of the spray nozzle to the surface *and* person performing the pressure washing.

A few tips for killing algae and mold on siding:

1. Do all you can to allow sunlight to hit the siding.
2. Allow cleaning solution to sit on siding for up to 10 minutes.
3. Pressure clean from the bottom up to avoid streaking.
4. Rinse from the top down.
5. Trim, as necessary, and cover the shrubbery around the home.
6. Use oxygen bleach, not chlorine bleach.

The ECC hopes this Advisory Circular proved useful to those whose homes are being invaded by the green stuff.