

Houses Need to Breathe

By: Inspector Weeks 613.290.3697

We have been getting what appears to be a green mould or moss on the outside of our cottage and side deck. I am concerned that this staining could lead to deterioration of the wood and create other problems. Do I need to be concerned and what can I do to prevent this problem ?? B. Robinson , Cantley , Quebec

You are right to be concerned.

When wood starts to develop mould and moss on the surface it is a sign that moisture is being retained by the wood and if left un-maintained will lead to wood rot, hopefully it is not too late. I am actually not surprised by your question and if its any concilation you are not alone with your problem.

This year, so far, has been quite damp and although we have not had a lot of rain (by volume) we have not had a lot of heat to dry things out. In addition to the damp conditions, this moisture has made for some great conditions for plant, shrub and tree growth. Take an objective look around your house and the area surrounding your house and see how things have grown up over the past few months. You will be amazed to see how much things have grown up ! Perhaps its time to get out the trimmers.

A house needs to breath. This is something I tell prospective buyers of country properties all too often. You will need to trim back the growth around your home to allow for improved air circulation. Of course we all like the shade and privacy this abundance of growth gives us but it can lead to problems. Furthermore your house will have a more cared for look by cutting back the undergrowth .

After you have trimmed back the area around your house, I would recommend using either a stiff brush to remove the mould and moss or a pressure sprayer, yes more water, to clean the wood and remove the staining. Some areas of the house that never see the sun, usually the north side of the building , are more prone to retain moisture and are therefore more prone to this kind of moss build-up. Roofs are also susceptible to this kind of invasive moss. Moss that develops on roofs is a definite sign of to much moisture and not enough air circulation. This will radically reduce the life of your shingles. Once you reach this stage, you may want to consider re-shingling the affected area.

So, although trees and growth around our homes are nice they need to be controlled. Tree hugging is good; but remember, your house has to breath !!



I welcome your questions please forward them to , Inspector Weeks ,c/o Peter Weeks Home Inspections PWHI@sympatico.ca or by phone at 613.290.3697.

Peter Weeks has been a Chelsea resident for 19 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing Residential Home Inspections for about four years. He is an Associate Member of OAHI (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB in Good Standing.

Peter Weeks is a fully insured and qualified Home Inspector registered with the Royal LePage Relocation Services Program.

A home inspection can be one of the most important investments you'll ever make. Choose Peter Weeks to provide you and your family PEACE OF MIND during the buying process.