

Crumbling masonry could have many causes

AP - Bubbling, flaking and peeling of paint used on masonry have a num-ber of causes. The most common are the chemical nature of the masonry it-self and the use of the wrong type of

Try 'Scare-eye' for pesky birds

AP - Many food crops, including strawberries, cherries, blueberries and sweet corn suffer bird damage. One way to protect them is to float a spe-cial "scare-eye" balloon, reported suc-cessful in scaring birds in Japan. Other ways are to use firecrackers,

sonic devices, carbide and propane cannons, rubber snakes, owl decoys and netting; but birds get used to these and their effectiveness dimin-

The "scare-eye" balloon is hung from trees or long poles to frighten away marauding birds. The balloons are made from heavy gauge, weather-proof vinyl, the size of basketballs.

The manufacturer, Hartmann's Plantation, Grand Junction, Mich., said control is most effective with birds that flock, but that swallows, purple martins and songbirds are not frightened by the eye. Hortmann's reommends two balloons per small garden, six per acre of orchard or farm

Moisture in the masonry mix, scepage of moisture through porous masonry from natural sources and a condition called efflorescence are other

reasons for the paint failures.

But there is a way to keep paint on musonry walls and ceilings. Proper surface preparation and the use of the right products can almost guarantee a long-lasting paint job on any masonry surface.

Man-made forms of masonry change from an easily formed plastic state to rock-like hardness through a chemical change. Once cured, the surface may be either acidic or alkaline, depending

on the type of masonry used.

To avoid paint failure caused by pH extremes on the surface of newly cured concrete, wait at least 30 days before painting. The pH problem will fade as the masonry ages.

MOISTURE IS THE biggest cul-prit in paint failure, whether the surface is masonry or wood. But masonry presents its own special set of prob-

Masonry is porous, so water can penetrate and seep through the entire structure. As it penetrates through to a painted area, water pushes the paint off. A basement wall that leaks after a rainstorm is a common example of this problem.

In many cases, says Richard Barako, lab safety coordinator at United Gilsonite, application of a masonry

waterproofing paint will solve the

problem of scepage.
Of course, if you have basement walls that leak, you should correct the cause of the leaking first. Look for improper grading that carries runoff toward the foundation rather than away; damaged gutters and down-spouts, and malfunctioning foundation

drainage systems.

Masonry surfaces frequently develop a condition called "efflorescence."
This condition is typified by chalky white stains on brick or concrete block walls. Efforescence results when soluble salts present in the masonry mixture are carried to the surface by water. The water evaporates, leaving the salts behind in the form of white stains. No paint, not even one specially formulated for masonry, will adhere to efflorescence. To remove it, you must "etch" the surface.

MASONRY IS ETCHED by using muriatic acid or an etching product that is milder than muriatic acid but adequate for the job. After mixing the acid according to directions, apply it using a brush to be sure it gets in all the pores.

The acid solution will foom briefly.

When the foaming stops, the salt is neutralized: The surface should then be thoroughly rinsed. Do not let the acid dry on the surface or it could interfere with the adhesion of the water-proofer or other coatings.

Etching should also be performed on masonry floors before painting if the surface is very smoothly troweled. It performs the same function as sanding a high gloss wood surface prior to painting.

To ensure a successful paint job, make sure the surface is free from dirt, oil and grease. If there is any doubt about the latter, wash down the surface with trisodium phosphate or a detergent and follow with a thorough rinsing.

To choose a product that is right for the masonry surface you are painting, decide first how the paint must per-

IF MOISTURE IS a problem. choose a product that is labeled "ma-sonry waterproofer." Ready-mixed varieties do the best job and solventbased products outperform latex formulations.

Powdered products that you mix with water are an economical choice and perform well, although not as well as the solvent-based products. Cement-based mixes, like cement paint, are excellent choices if you wish to decorate masonry walls where water

is not particularly a problem.

The masonry waterproofers, the powdered product and the cement paint are all made with Portland cement. By using a product made with the same material as surfaces on which it will be used, you increase the

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