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How Your Timber Will Weather

Why does timber turn grey/silver?

Timber will weather to an attractive silver/grey hue after long term exposure to UV rays. In terms of fading, it is difficult to determine how long your timber will retain its colour since this depends completely on the level of exposure that your material receives. Generally, north-facing timber will weather slower than timber located on the south-facing side of a dwelling.

All external buildings will gradually change over time, and timber is no exception due to constantly being exposed to the ever-changing elements of the UK climate. The weathering process will change the surface appearance of the boards and the overall look of the building. However, this will not affect the durability of our ThermoWood boards.

Weathering is a normal and healthy process in timber and should not be mistaken for fungal decay which can be evident in many softwood timbers which aren't thermally modified, due to the open and less dense cell structure. When treated correctly and planned for, the weathering of timber can complement the look of your project or be avoided if you apply the recommended treatments.

ThermoWood

Due to the thermal-modification treatment that our ThermoWood materials undergo, the treatment reduces hygroscopicity and accompanying dimensional changes in the wood. Offering dimensional stability and durability. This makes the material resistant to the harsh weather conditions that the UK endures.

Design and Location

Sometimes, the weathering of timber is dependent on how the project is designed and located. If your material is sheltered from rain or on a side that receives less sunlight, the effects of weathering will be slowed. Of course, any timber which is positioned to take the full force of the weather will fade quicker. In areas of high rainfall, some timber materials will weather in just a few months. In drier areas, the process is usually slower. Over time, the entire building, unless completely sheltered will weather to the same colour and will remain an attractive silver/grey hue for years to come.

Top Tip: Planting trees to shelter or shade the building will reduce the effects of the elements of the building directly.

UV Exposure

If your timber is exposed to a high level of UV rays, the material will most likely weather quicker than dwellings that are not constantly exposed to the sun. Initially, the timber will begin to take on a yellow or brown tone, which will then turn to a grey/silver tone. An elevation that faces due south will be subject to greater UV exposure than a north facing elevation which does not see any direct sun (applicable to properties in the Northern Hemisphere).

Will my timber deteriorate when it weathers?

Many people assume that their timber must be deteriorating if it weathers to a different colour. This is not true! A colour fade does not indicate that the timber is deteriorating. In the case of our ThermoWoods, if you scratched the surface of a weathered board, you will find that the original colour is underneath. This is simply just the surface appearance and the durable properties of the timber are not diminished. Opting for good quality hardwood or a clear grade softwood will provide you with a durable, long-term solution whether it fades to a silvery hue or is re-oiled, compared to a lower cost knotty softwood.

How do I stop my timber from weathering?

Although timber looks very attractive before and after it has weathered, since this demonstrates that the product is natural and over-time the property will blend into its' environment, some customers choose to delay the weathering process, to ensure that their timber stays its original colour.

Timber cladding can be treated with clear or coloured treatments which slow the process of ageing. These coatings will need to be reapplied every few years over the life of the timber to restore and maintain the original colour of the boards. The primary function of a coating is to protect the timber from UV degradation, maintaining its appearance. Clear coatings will preserve the original colour of the timber, and coloured coatings can be applied in a colour of your choice. However, we would always recommend a clear coating like our Messmers UV Plus Oil as this will enhance the natural beauty of the timber.

When a coating is applied in a factory, before the timber is exposed to the elements, this eliminates the variables which affect a site applied coating, such as weather and humidity. Keeping the boards clean, dry and away from UV rays before the coating is applied will have a positive effect on the coating system.

Top Tip: we would recommend applying a coating to the rear of your boards before installing. This prevents moisture absorption which ensures that the material and trim components maintain dimensional stability.

Will my charred cladding fade?

Due to the charring process that our ThermoChar® range goes through, our heavy charred cladding requires no maintenance. This is because the charring process provides an additional level of protection and UV resistance.

Our medium charred composition is maintenance-free and will not be affected by the ever-changing UK climate. However, it will start to fade after long-term UV ray exposure turning to an attractive silver/grey hue. We are unable to indicate how long this will take, as this depends on what way your timber is facing and the level of UV rays it is exposed to. Once your charred material has faded, you cannot re-char it. However, you could apply a coloured coating to maintain the dark appearance.

The light charred materials of our ThermoChar® range will maintain their dark grain, however, the sections of the board which are left natural will gradually fade to a silver tone, which many people love the contrasting look of!

