

Removing dead Ivy from walls.

Last Updated: Thursday, February 7th, 2002, Created: Thursday, February 7th, 2002

John from Mississauga, Ontario writes: "We recently bought a house that was half covered in ivy. We didn't like it and we were told to cut the roots and let the ivy die and then just tear it down from the walls. We cut the roots and let the ivy die but we noticed all these little suction cups that held the ivy to the brick and wood siding. What's the best way to remove them?"

Unfortunately John, you have a problem there. Ivy not only attaches onto surfaces, porous or not, but on brick and wood, it actually sends little gripping roots into the siding. We can get much of it off, but depending on the age of the ivy, you could have significant damage done. With brick, this often requires repointing. Which is to say, from a building science point of view, climbing ivy is a very bad idea.

OK, given that there is ivy on the wall, what is the best way to get rid of it? You were right to cut the plant to kill it. But the experts are telling me that you then want to wait for it to turn colour, but not let it get hard -- usually about 3 weeks from cutting off the plant. If you act too soon, it is still gripping strongly to the wall. If you wait too long, the residua on the wall becomes too hard. If you get it right in-between the two, you can simply use soapy water and a bristle brush to scrub off the suckers. They tell me nothing else will work.

However, I wonder about the new deck "restorer" cleaners, not the bleach based cleaners but those that actually dissolve the top layer of the wood to give you a clean fresh look. I know that these products work well on asphalt roofs for removing moss. It is winter right now so I can't test it, but in the spring I intend to try these on ivy suckers on a brick wall. If anyone has any experience with this, let me know and we will add the information here.

Keywords:

Aluminum, Brick, Cleaning, Ivy, Plants, Siding, Vinyl, Walls, Wood