



BEST OF LIME
INNOVATORS IN LIME PLASTERS

TECHNICAL ADVICE

The Use of Limewash

TGN2 RJ3.04



Limewash is a traditional permeable paint for use on porous building materials such as lime plaster, lime render, limestone and soft brick. It is a thin dilution of non-hydraulic lime, water, and alkali-fast powder pigments. Exterior grade limewash contains biocides and additional binders – casein, tallow or linseed oil – to improve rain-shedding and durability.

Pure Limewash is normally reserved for internal use. Casein Bound Limewash is an exterior grade that is often also used internally as it is less likely to rub off, and

Tallow Bound Limewash is an exterior grade rarely used internally.

Limewash can be applied to newly applied lime plaster and render before it has fully carbonated as the permeable limewash does not impede the carbonation of the plaster beneath.

Limewash, due to the thin consistency, can be 'messy' to apply and protections must be provided. Special care must be taken if oak is present as it is permanently stained by lime. Lime is alkali and can cause serious eye damage and suitable protective clothing and full-face protection must be worn. Applying limewash to ceilings is particularly hazardous, and soft distemper is often preferred for the decoration of ceilings. Indeed, distempers are often used in preference to limewash for the internal decoration of walls and ceilings.

Limewash can only be applied to previously painted surfaces if the existing paint is limewash, and should not be applied to previously distemper or emulsion painted surfaces.

PREPARATION

Limewashes require a surface that is firm, clean, and porous. Remove all loose material and dirt and previously limewashed surfaces should be thoroughly soft-brushed and washed with a wet sponge to remove dust, dirt and all loose chalky material that is removed readily.

Any algae or mould must be treated with an algaecide or fungicide and thoroughly washed off with clean water. Do not use proprietary fungicides containing water repellents. Make good and fill with a compatible lime filler.

Limewash must be applied to a damp surface. Lime plaster and render, porous stone and brick must be thoroughly moistened with a mist spray prior to application.