

# Controlling Moss on Roofs

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Moss is a simple form of plant growth that thrives in damp, shaded locations. It is likely to be found on the north slopes of roofs and roofs shaded by overhanging trees.

Control measures include removal of overhanging branches, scraping away as much moss as possible, and

spraying the area with chemical. Spraying is most effective when the moss is actively growing, and when rain is not likely for several days. Moss grows vigorously during the rainy seasons—fall, winter, and spring. Very little growth occurs during the summer.

## Recommended Materials

### Zinc galvanized or copper flashings and ridges

A galvanized or copper ridge will be effective for about 10 to 15 feet down from the ridge on most roofs. Normal corrosion from bare copper wires, stretched about every 10 feet horizontally along the butt ends of shingles, will provide some moss control.

### Pentachlorophenol

Pentachlorophenol should be used dissolved in oil carriers such as diesel oil. Solutions containing not more than 5% by weight of pentachlorophenol will kill moss and prevent its growth for some time. The solution can be purchased in a ready to use form or in a concentrate that can be diluted easily to the proper concentration. Oil solutions should not be used on asphalt roofs. Pentachlorophenol is toxic to plants, and can be toxic to man if used improperly. Follow the manufacturers directions carefully.

### Sodium pentachlorophenate (5% solution)

To prepare 5 gallons of 5% solution, mix 2 pounds of sodium pentachlorophenate powder in 5 gallons of water. Sodium pentachlorophenate solutions may be used safely on asphalt roofs. Sodium pentachlorophenate is toxic to plants, and can be toxic to man if used improperly.

### Copper sulfate (blue stone)

Copper is effective when sprayed on moss at the rate of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce per 10 gallons of water. It is corrosive to metal eave troughs, downspouts, and metal spray equipment, and they should be washed thoroughly with water immediately after treatment. Copper sulfate

solution has a good residual effect, depending on type of roof, amount of penetration, and amount of rainfall.

### Zinc chloride

Spray moss with a 10% solution. Zinc chloride is corrosive to metals and injurious to plants.

### Arsenic compounds (sodium arsenite, arsenic trioxide)

Spray the surface of moss with a solution of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce in 10 gallons of water. Arsenic compounds are very poisonous to humans and animals, and are injurious to plants. Arsenic solutions have fair residual effect.

### Table salt

Spray the surface of moss with a 10% to 20% solution or sprinkle dry table salt when moss is wet. Table salt does not have a residual effect, and is not as effective as some of the other materials. Table salt is also corrosive to metals and injurious to plants.

### Mercury compounds

Some mercury-containing fungicides are being recommended for moss control. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for safe and effective use. Mercury-containing compounds are very poisonous to humans and animals.

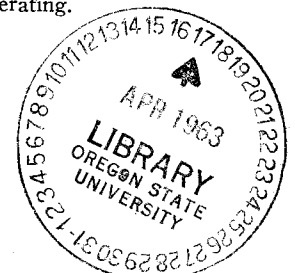
### Other weed-killer compounds

Some compounds normally used as weed killers are also effective for moss control. Follow the manufacturer's directions and precautions for use.

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## Cautions

Use extreme care when applying the materials mentioned above. Keep them from children and animals and prevent contamination of plants. Be sure that spray does not fall or drift onto plants, and that spray solution is not carried down drainspouts to injure plants in foundation plantings. Use of a sprinkler can for applying solutions may reduce the drift hazard.

Remember that several of the chemicals recom-

mended for control of moss are very corrosive to metal. Be sure gutters and downspouts are clear, so solutions washing off treated roofs do not stand in troughs. After treating the roof thoroughly, flush gutters and drainspouts with fresh water to prevent corrosion and costly replacement. Equipment can be protected by adding 2 tablespoons of household ammonia to a gallon of water for the final flushing through the sprayer.