

Stencils Turn Backyards Into Works Of Art

(NAPSA)—Stenciling has a history in America as an inexpensive and easy way to add color and drama to interior walls. Today, this tradition is moving to the exterior of the house, bringing personality and character to decks and fencing.

"We take so much care personalizing the insides of our homes. Homeowners are realizing that it is very gratifying to bring that decorative flare outdoors too," says Pat Coughlin, of The Flood Company, makers of exterior stains, finishes and cleaners for more than 150 years.

Coughlin offers the following suggestions for adding stencils to your deck or fence:

- Before you begin, get your deck in shape by cleaning it and applying a fresh coat of finish. A cleaner made especially for outdoor wood, such as Dekswood Deck Cleaner and Brightener, will remove dirt without harming the wood or surrounding plants and shrubs. If you have an old finish to remove, use Flood's PowerLift Deck Sealer Remover. Or, for stubborn coatings try StainStrip Exterior Stain Stripper. Once the deck is clean, apply a protective coating to the entire surface.

- Now you're ready to stencil. Create your own stencil design by tracing and cutting out a favorite symbol, or purchase a precut stencil from a craft store. Whichever design you choose, use your own style, extending your indoor décor outside.

Simply tape your stencil carefully in place, and blot lightly with the stain color of your choice over the entire area using a special stencil brush. Check it as you go



to ensure that you are achieving the look you desire. Fewer, rather than more, stencils often give a more dramatic, tasteful look.

- Solid color stains give the best effect for stenciling because of their opacity and peel resistance. Flood Solid Color Deck and Siding Stain is guaranteed against peeling for five years on horizontal surfaces, and fifteen years on vertical siding, fencing and posts.

- Consider stencils on stair risers, posts, along a bench or near a doorway. You can even use them to decorate the floorboards. Don't forget about fences, gates and trellises, which are ideal for stencil applications.

Whether you simply add some cheer with a few stencils or tackle an entire floor, stenciling can use your personal style and pizzazz to make a charming outdoor look.

For more information on stenciling, call or log on for a free Can-Do Project Planner at 1-800-321-3444, or www.floodco.com.