

ROOF MOSS CONTROL



Nobody wants moss on their roof. It can hold moisture, causing leaks and serious damage. Yet many moss removal treatments can harm our environment and waterways. Follow the tips below to help prevent and treat roof moss in an environmentally friendly way.

Low-chemical removal

- Small, newly established patches can sometimes be removed with gentle wet sweeping or a leaf blower.
- In the summer, try sprinkling powdered dish or laundry detergent on moss-covered areas. Wait three or four days and remove moss with a broom or brush. Be sure to clean the soap and moss out of the gutters as well.
- Use a scraper or heavy wire brush if gentle brushing doesn't work.
- Avoid power washing. It can damage shingles or get water under them.

Chemical removal

- If you use moss control products, choose from the safer options that are available. Look for products containing soaps, fatty acids or ferrous sulfate, which are less toxic and designed to protect the environment.
- Avoid products containing copper, zinc and iron sulfate. These substances can pollute streams and are toxic to aquatic animals. Also, they kill moss but don't remove plant material, so you'll still have to clean your roof.
- Use minimal concentrations as recommended on the product label.

Prevent runoff

- Don't allow moss control products or contaminated rinse water to run into a storm drain or into the street, where it will drain to the nearest creek.
- Temporarily disconnect your downspouts when applying liquid treatments. The runoff will filter through the soil and break down, instead of going to the nearest stream. Reconnect the downspouts after at least three rainfalls, or when there is no visible chemical residue or sheen.

Keep in mind that moss is easiest to remove in the summer, when it's dried out.

Prevention

- Learn where and when the moss grows most thickly. These are areas that may need less moisture, more light and more attention.
- Prune overhanging branches to reduce shade and moisture, let in more light and slow moss buildup.
- Clean your roof once or twice a year with a brush or broom. Leaves and pine needles hold moisture.

Outside help

Consider hiring someone to help if your roof is steep. Before you hire roof treatment professionals, ask what they use and how they handle runoff.

If you are replacing your roof, consider installing metal roofing, which is too smooth for moss to grow on and doesn't need replacing. It is more expensive than composite shingles, but since the lifetime of the roof is longer, the overall long-term cost is comparable.

Resources

- Lawn and garden products that are safer for the environment can be found on Metro's growsmartgrowsafe.org.
- Explore simple steps you can take to be a Clean Water Hero at cleanwaterservices.org/hero.

Everything we do at Clean Water Services aims to protect public health while enhancing the natural environment of the Tualatin River Watershed.