

Reader feedback...

The Owner Builder gets many enquiries from readers on the most amazing range of subjects. Here we share a few of these and invite you to contribute your own questions or comments - there is very rarely just one right answer to a given situation!



Sticky floor problem?

In #142 Aug/Sep 2007, the owners of the house featured in 'Open House' mentioned that they had problems with the sticky finish obtained with *Ardvos* natural oil on their floors.

The oil was applied very thinly, allowed to dry for 24 hours and then lightly sanded and reapplied. The only thing we couldn't follow was wiping the excess oil off the floor as it was impossible to walk over the wet floor to do that.

Livos Australia are the Australia wide distributors of the Livos/Ardvos range of products, and have offered this advice:

Once the oil is applied, it should be allowed to soak into the timber for the specified time, and then the excess oil must be completely removed. This can be carried out by hand, or for larger areas cloths attached to a white pad on a floor sanding machine would save time and effort. Unlike varnishes or modified tung oils, one may walk over the area to wipe off the excess, and by wiping over the footsteps the imprints are not left in. If this excess is not removed, you will be left with a sticky floor that is unable to bear load without scratching.



Good light and ventilation starts off the curing process, and moving in can be as soon as 24 hours after completing the floor. Floors should be treated with care until the hardening process is complete, and should not be washed too early.

Unlike conventional coatings, the *Livos* oils are penetrating oils that seal from within rather than leaving a coating on top of the timber. Penetration ensures easy rejuvenation without sanding back. Preparation with any product is important. The oils not only highlight the natural colour and markings of the timber, but also highlight any imperfections in the sanding. To ensure the surface is scratch free, sanding is generally finer than for a conventional chemical application.

Human friendly greenie

Mark from Qld feels that we have lost touch with the basic principles of building.

I have no professional qualifications but have always been interested in housing design and environmentalism. I consider myself to be a 'human friendly greenie.' In my view the fundamental area where we are going wrong, is that we want to ignore the past instead of learning from it. Maybe it is time for us to come up with the new 'Queenslander' for the twenty-first century.

If we look at the common sense principles used by the early settlers and use them with our modern materials and engineering, we could make our buildings more liveable.

For example, you would have seen a farm with the land cleared for miles around except for around the house, where the trees had been left to grow and flourish. These trees shaded the house and the area around the house, acting as a buffer to the heat and wind, storms and dust. They created a microclimate; the ground and air around the house was cooler and evaporation lower, the shade made the building cooler. To gain even more advantage, verandahs were added to surround the living area of the house.

Practise safe drilling!

Michael from Victoria sent us some useful tips on safety when drilling through metal.



Be very cautious when drilling holes in metals, especially the steel used in structural items like I-beams and square sections. Not only do the holes potentially alter the structural performance of the material, but they can also lead to serious injury.

Metal does not give or yield in the same way that timber or plastic does. The drill bit tends to seize suddenly as it cuts into the material. This means that the torque or turning power of the drill is reversed and transferred to your hand, wrist or arm. This happens instantly and suddenly, without warning.

The drill is then likely to pull itself out of your grasp, often with considerable force, spin around and give you a whack, usually on the wrist. If you are standing on a ladder at the time, this could cause you to lose balance and fall off. Many a tradie has had a wrist broken, or worse, because of this.

The larger the hole, the bigger the risk. One approach to drilling holes in metals is to start with a small size drill bit to make a pilot hole, and then progressively working upwards with larger bits. Always seek professional advice regarding potential structural issues, and have as many holes as possible pre-drilled by the suppliers.