

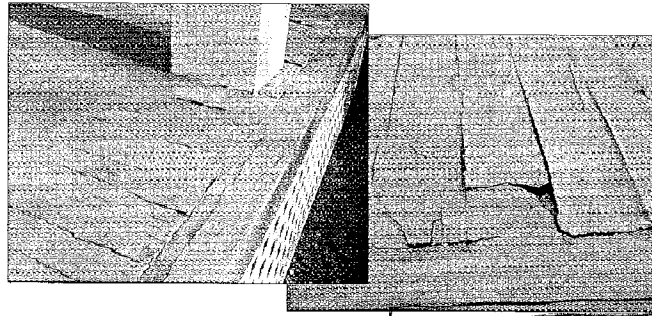
# Porch Paint Complaint

The porch floor of our 100-year-old Victorian farmhouse in the suburbs was rebuilt with common tongue-and-groove pine and looked great for two years. Then the finish started to crack so we recoated it with industrial, two-part epoxy paint. Now it's worse than ever and heaving up spots. What's wrong—the wood?

*Matt Sweeney*

*Floral Park, New York*

**P**orches always take a beating because they're so out in the weather. Deck perimeters are particularly prone to deterioration given their exposure to direct sun and rain on top, and dampness and shade underneath. The fact that your deck looked fine for two years probably means that it's not the wood but the finish that caused prob-



Paint peeling down to wood and deformed boards hint at moisture problems for this porch.

lems. One possibility is that moisture migrating from the crawl space into the deck boards was absorbed by the wood but then couldn't escape through the impermeable epoxy paint, so it collected to blister the paint and swell the wood.

Whatever porch flooring you use, you'll extend its life by priming every board on all sides before installation, including the tongues and grooves. A quality wood preservative, a thinned coat

of oil-based porch paint, or a thinned coat of primer is acceptable. Some guidebooks recommend running a small bead of caulk between the tongue and groove just before installation. Take this step in addition to priming, not as the sole protection. Traditionalists still prefer oil-based enamel for finish paint, but chemists and testing labs claim that top-quality latex porch paints perform equally well. 🏠

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