

How to Use M-Balm and E-Wood

Both M-Balm and E-Wood are two component epoxies that are used for repairing soft spots, rot pockets and other types of defects in logs and timbers. Although they can be used individually, they are typically applied as a pair with each product playing a specific role. M-Balm is a wood consolidator that hardens loose friable wood fibers and E-Wood is a putty used to fill voids or cavities in logs and timbers.

M-Balm

When the A and B components of M-Balm are mixed together (two parts A to one part B by volume), they form a low viscosity liquid. The purpose for this low viscosity is to allow the product to soak into wood fibers. After about 15 to 20 minutes, the liquid M-Balm will begin to harden. Once hard any loose, friable wood fibers will be consolidated into a solid mass. One limitation of M-Balm is that the wood must be very dry (at most 15% moisture content) for the M-Balm to be able to soak into the wood. This presents a challenge when attempting to repair areas that have been damaged by decay, since typically, these areas are quite damp. The best thing to do in these cases is to remove the source of the moisture by eliminating any leaks or draping plastic film over the area to prevent rainwater from saturating the wood. You must wait until the wood is dry before attempting to repair it.



Cleaned out decayed pocket with some loose wood fibers.

Note: When repairing wood that has been damaged by decay fungi, we recommend that the area first be treated with Shell-Guard RTU. This will eradicate any decay fungi that may still be alive and prevent any future infestations. Shell-Guard RTU may be applied while the area is still wet or moist, but it is still important that the wood be allowed to dry before applying M-Balm.



Applying M-Balm.

The easiest way to apply M-Balm is with some type of plastic squeeze bottle such as a clean, empty mustard container. Never use glass to mix the components of M-Balm. You need to be aware that within a few minutes after being mixed together, the liquid gets hot, very hot! The greater the volume the hotter it will get. The heat is the result of a chemical reaction between components A and B. It is best to mix small quantities of M-Balm at a time. This will reduce the amount of heat generated from the reaction.

Also, since M-Balm hardens in ca. 15 minutes, any product that is not applied within that time will be unusable. M-Balm can be applied with a brush, but once the M-Balm begins to cure, the brush will become hard and will have to be discarded. Whichever application method you use, avoid getting any M-Balm on the surface of the wood. It is difficult to simply cover cured M-Balm with paint or stain. Any spots of M-Balm that are on the visible surface will always stick out from the rest of the wall.

Whenever you are planning to fill a pocket or void using E-Wood or any other type of wood filler, first use M-Balm to consolidate any loose wood fibers present inside the void. Wood fillers and putties like E-Wood will not adhere to loose fibers and if you do not consolidate them with M-Balm, you risk the patch falling out of the void in the future. It is not necessary to wait until the M-Balm cures before filling the void. M-Balm does not require air to cure and this will increase the adhesion between M-Balm and E-wood.



Wood fibers consolidated with M-Balm.

E-Wood

E-Wood is a two component epoxy putty that can be used to fill holes or voids in wood. E-Wood should not be used to fill checks or gaps between logs since once it cures it has no flexibility, and any movement will cause it to pull away from the wood. E-Wood is somewhat challenging to mix together since both components are thick and putty-like. Equal amounts of both A and B components must be kneaded together by hand until the color is uniform throughout the mass. Up to two (2) ounces of LIFELINE™ stains can be added to 24 ounces (12 ounces of component A and 12 ounces of component B) of blended E-Wood to aid in the hiding of the repair. Once it is thoroughly mixed, it can then be pressed into the void and shaped to match the contour of the surface. If desired a texture or pattern may be worked into the surface of the uncured E-Wood to help it blend in with the surrounding wood. A stain can be applied to the surface of the E-Wood either before or after it has cured. E-Wood will begin to harden in about an hour or two, so you have more time to work with it than you do with M-Balm. Being an epoxy, no shrinkage will occur once the E-Wood is in place.



Cavity filled with E-Wood.



Stain applied to E-Wood.