



Identify Wet Rot black fungus



Identify Wet Rot wood crumbles



Identify wet rot - rotten floor

## Wet rot

---

Wet rot, whilst typically not as difficult to eradicate as dry rot, certainly does occur more often and can nevertheless cause severe damage within your property. The rot attacks timber in damp conditions and if allowed to go unchecked or without wet rot treatment, can be a common cause of structural defects within a property.

### How wet rot occurs

In order to grow, wet rot requires a regular source of moisture that can often result from sources of defective plumbing, gutters, downpipes or stone pointing. The moisture together with the presence of wood can allow wet rot spores to germinate and grow that will eventually lead to the timber losing its strength.

### Why wet rot can be a problem

Unightly and smelly, if wet rot is left to continue, the growth process of wet rot will eventually remove the strength from the timber it encounters in a similar fashion to that of dry rot. Over time, timber may become dangerously unsafe.

### How to spot wet rot

Typical indications for identifying wet rot include:

- A damp musty smell
- Cracking and softening of timber that is often discoloured, distorted and possibly losing its strength.
- You may notice some fungal growth

The above is just a general summary.

## How to fix a wet rot problem

Thankfully wet rot decay is typically confined to areas where the timber has become and remains wet. However, it is not a case of just fixing the initial wet rot. You have to fix the source of the water ingress to ensure that the wet rot does not re-appear. After the source of the water has been identified, treatment of wet rot can continue which generally involves the replacement of timber within the infected area.

Certainly, a professional property survey will be able to identify and reveal the full scope of any wet rot problem and the sources of any water ingress. Using specialist surveying tools, wet rot can be surveyed even in unexposed areas within a property. If a property survey reveals the presence of wet rot then the appropriate wet rot treatment may be recommended.

## What is wet rot

---

What is wet rot? Basically it is timber that is decaying naturally in the presence of high moisture levels.

The term wet rot however, is a general term used to describe a variety of wet rot species responsible for wood rot, the most common being 'Cellar Fungus' (*Coniophora Puteana*).

### What is wet rot – how is it caused

Wet rot can occur for various reasons. The moisture combined with the presence of wood can provide the ideal breeding ground for wet rot spores. It could be that you have a leaky roof, leaking pipes, a washing machine that has not been connected up correctly or simply just a lack of due care when using washing facilities. Either way, if timber has been exposed to damp for a sustainable period of time, the outcome is generally a form of wet rot.

### What is the difference between wet rot and dry rot?

As you might have guessed by the name, the names of the different rot types make it fairly clear. Wet rot generally attacks timber with higher moisture content than dry rot, typically in excess of 30%.

Out with the physical difference that identifies dry rot and identifies wet rot, the main difference is that dry rot does not need to be near the source of moisture to grow while wet rot has to be close to the source of moisture and generally attacks timber with a higher moisture content, typically in excess of 30%. Wet rot is also not as destructive as dry rot and is easier to treat.

---

# How to identify wet rot

---

Being able to identify wet rot is not an exact science. The many different forms of wet rot can affect timber in different or similar ways. It can even be the case where it can be difficult to identify the difference between wet rot and the more serious dry rot if there is no visual dry rot fruiting body present. Certainly, a professional property survey will be able to clear any uncertainty. In the meantime however, the guide below should be able to help you initially identify the presence of wet rot.

We have compiled a series of pictures of wet rot to help you identify it in addition to the guide below.

## Tell-tale signs to identify wet rot

- Look out for largely black and usually localised fungus growing on timber.
- Timber affected by wet rot will feel soft and spongy (even through a coat of paint) and look darker than the surrounding timber.
- When dry, the timber will easily crack and crumble into fine particles. It can also be susceptible to shrinkage.
- Some types of wet rot cause the wood to bleach. This is common in doors and window frames.
- Look for damaged or flaky paint. If the paint finish is damaged, this can increase the risk of wet rot. If you suspect wet rot and the paint is not damaged, push a thin bladed knife into the painted timber. The blade should stop after a short distance. If it goes in up to the handle, it is almost certainly a sign of rot behind the paint.
- Often wet rot is associated with a damp musty smell.

Where there is no obvious mycelium present wet rot can generally be identified and differentiated from dry rot by the differing colour of the decayed timber as well as the size and type of cracking by the timber as the wet rot progresses.

If you have any of the described conditions above, specialist wet rot treatment will be required to inhibit this.