

News about creosote

The Creosote Council, which represented the interests of manufacturers and suppliers of industrial and DIY grades of creosote along with timber treatment companies and users of creosoted timber, was dissolved at its last Annual General Meeting on 1 May 2002. This followed a decision by the European Union member states to end the supply of creosote to the DIY market (Directive 2001/90/EC) with effect from mid 2003. In the meantime creosote for DIY use should continue to be available from your usual supplier through to 30 April 2003. The Creosote Council had strong reservations about the robustness of the data used by the EU to justify this development but the Brussels bureaucrats could not be persuaded from their course. Use by professionals (e.g. fencing contractors) and in industrial treatment plants is not affected. Even when professional and industrial users carry out treatment there will, from mid 2003, be restrictions on where treated timber can be used. These restrictions will also apply to wood treated with creosote before the directive comes into force in the UK.

The BWPDA was formed in 1930 to ensure information on the benefits of protecting wood against rot, insect attack and fire is readily available and to promote best practice in treatment and use of treated timber. Following the closure of the Creosote Council, professional and industrial suppliers and users of creosote and creosote-treated timber have formed the Creosote Group of the BWPDA to ensure information and guidance on correct use of creosote and treated timber continues to be available to the public and professionals alike. The BWPDA shares the Creosote Council's reservations about the justification for the new restrictions and the BWPDA Creosote Group is responding to the British government's consultation on the introduction of the new restrictions into UK law. If you need a preservative to use yourself you will find quite a range of preservatives available on suppliers' shelves alongside 100% Coal Tar Creosote. 100% Coal Tar Creosote is a unique product and you should compare products carefully before deciding which is best for your particular requirements. Some products sold for fencing treatment for example are essentially to colour the wood and give some protection against mould growth, others are formulated to protect against rotting. 100% Coal Tar Creosote colours, protects against rot and insects and provides a degree of water repellency all in one. In all cases read the label and follow the safety advice carefully. **Warning - not all products with the word 'creosote' in the name contain creosote - safety precautions when using creosote may differ from other products - read the label carefully to find what the product contains and follow instructions.**

Pressure treatment of wood with industrial grade creosote in accordance with British Standards protects it against all forms of rot and insect attack for decades and is suitable for many uses out of doors and in the ground such as fence posts. Your fencing contractor will be able to supply and erect a good quality wooden fence pre-treated with creosote. Old creosoted railway sleepers are often available for landscaping and other uses in parks and gardens and these will give a long life even after having served their purpose on the railways for many years. Avoid frequent skin contact with creosoted surfaces. Any risk of staining skin or clothing from contact with treated surfaces will normally reduce quickly when treated wood is exposed to the weather.

If you have a specific question on creosote, please email it to creosote@bwpda.co.uk