

Weathering & Distressing Clapboard & Other Siding

This is similar to the strip wood technique

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Kit Building & Scratch Building Services - Dioramas - Scenery

Clapboard Siding Weathering Technique (works on most siding sheets)

These basic formulas are what I use to weather my siding. Any combination would work so use what works best for you. It's just important to use multiple colors so the final result looks like the real world. The big difference between the strip wood and siding technique is the siding requires two coats of Floquil Grime.

The important thing to remember is to use the same stain and powder colorings as your strip wood. You want the two woods types to look as if they came from the same source and weathered the same. It will never be perfect, which is preferred for a believable result.

Washes, Dyes & Powders

Washes are a matter of personal preference. I have 3 different mixtures, simply to continue to introduce subtle changes in the shading of the wood. To me this helps to mimic real life. Below are the different mixtures I happen to use...

Stains & Washes

- Monster Mix #1 - Silver
- Monster Mix #2 - Grey
- Monster Mix #3 - Jet Black
- Monster Mix Black Wash Detail Enhancer
- Monster Mix Thinner
- Floquil Grime

In order to make wood look weathered it is important to go out and look at it. Use websites like www.flickr.com to research old wood buildings. You will be amazed at all the different variations of colors and textures. Wood weathers differently in different parts of the country, so be sure to use a color palette that brings realism to your layout.

One of the major differences between working with scribed siding and strip wood is the siding seems to be more porous than the strip wood and it seems to absorb dyes and stains faster than the strip wood. Now the strip wood absorbs as well and I counter that as you will see later. The siding needed something to counter this effect. I found that Floquil Grime did the job. The color works for me and more importantly it countered the absorption issue. Don't get me wrong, I want the wood to absorb the dyes just not all at once.

The first step after hitting all the scribed siding with two coats of Grime is to add the wood grain. The way I add wood grain is with a Dremel tool and a wire brush. I use the softer wire brush, I guess the best way to know which one is by the shaft... the hard wore brush has a gold color shaft and the soft wire brush has a silver shaft (you want the silver shaft). Since this can really open the pores in the wood, it was the main reason I needed to "treat" the wood first with the Grime or the dyes would just blacken the wood.

Something else to keep in mind... It is going to seem that I am going through a lot of steps, and some steps seem to cover up the previous step, don't worry. What I am doing is "layering". Everything I do here will come through in the end. The layering allows more of a realistic look to the wood, it also give the appearance of texture. Don't be afraid to embellish some of the effects even if they seem slightly out of scale, I am trying to trick the minds eye. If done right the observer will see things that aren't there as the mind fills in the blanks.

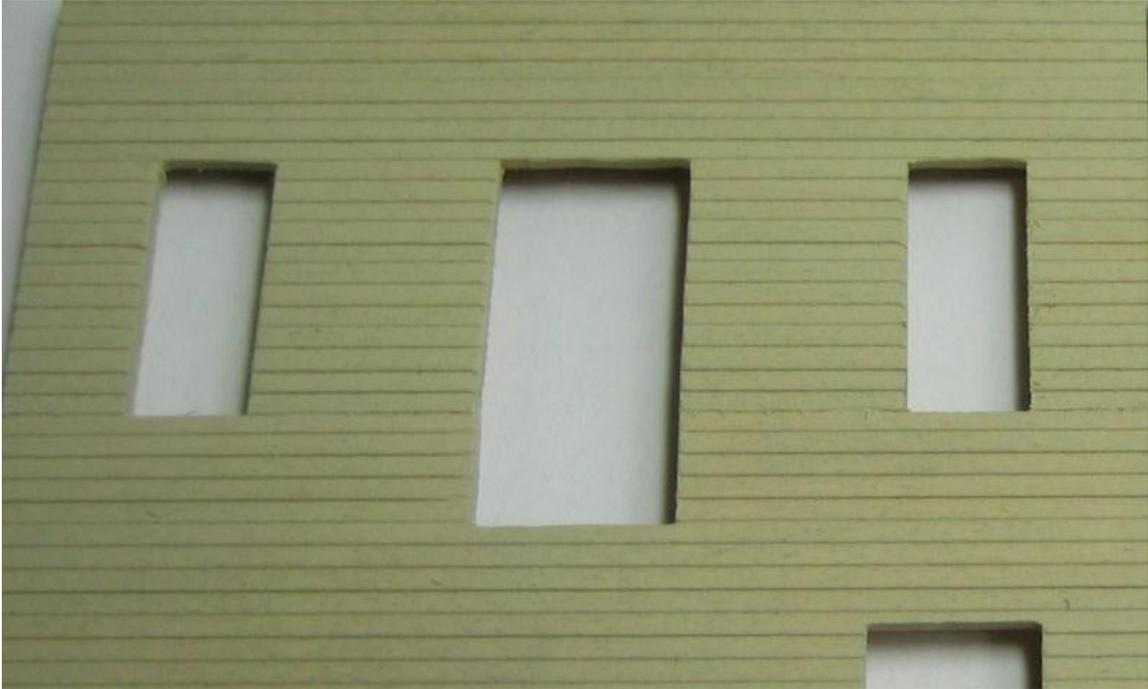
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This photo just show the siding after it is painted with two coats of Floquil Grime...



The next two photos show the wire brush adding wood grain. The great effect here is the Grime reacts to the metal on the wire brush and it blacken the wood. Again this helps the layering process. Once done with the wire brush I like to paint the wood again with the Floquil Grime, but this time I thin it out so it is more like a wash. This will lighten the blackening effect from the previous step.



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Here is the siding after the wire brush treatment and before it is painted with the thinned out Grime. You do not have to lighten this effect as it looks pretty good by itself.



In the next step you will see how I add the weathering powders to add more coloration. It really helps with the texture and the layering effect.

Time to add the powders.

We add the powders at this stage because it will get into the grain we created. I also make sure I cover everything up with the powders. Full coverage is important to the next step. As I add more distressing (yes more after the powders are dry), I am pushing the powders further into the wood.

I use Bragdon and Doc O'Brien's weathering powders. Use what you have, what you like, what you can afford... I feel they are all the same. They are not chinks.

Firstly you need to determine what "look" you want your wood. If you have reference photos use them... you can get great photos at www.flickr.com and they are free (just mind copyrights). I mix up two different colors of powders, a gray brown mix and a brown gray mix. In this project I am going for real old wood, so I want more grey, but leaving some with a tint of brown has a more realistic effect. Your colors may be different. I mix some light grays, dark grays, a pinch of black, some white, some tan and some weathered brown. One mix has more grays and one mix has more brown. The black and white are added last and are never really mixed in fully. It makes for

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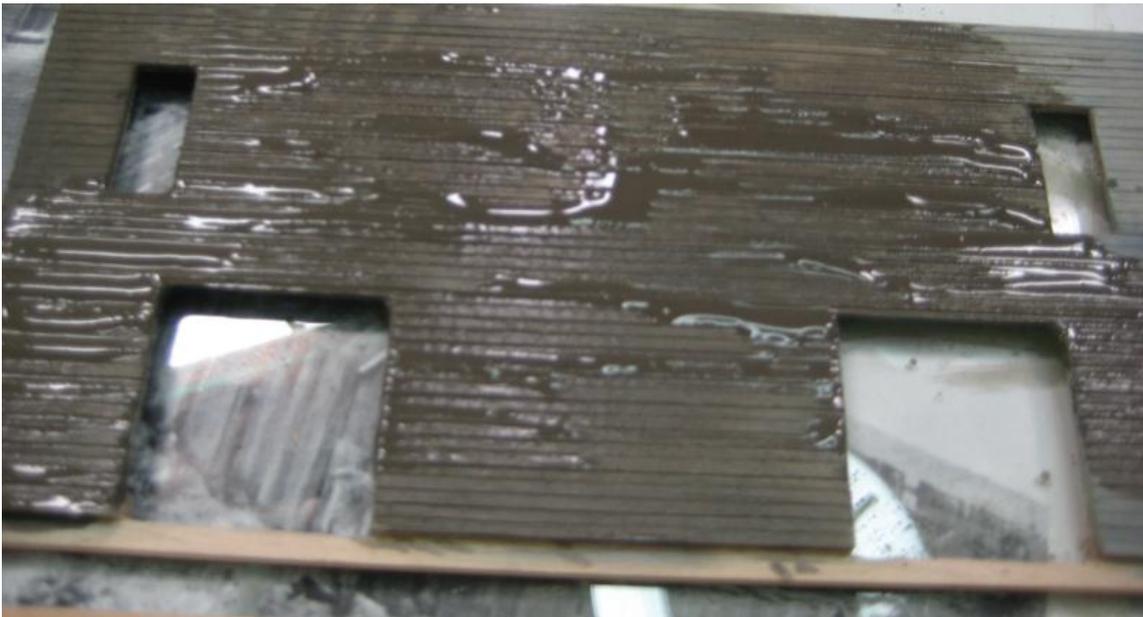
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a nice effect when a big streak of black or white runs down a board. It gets blended so far down you don't notice it.

I apply the powders wet with denatured or 99% isopropyl alcohol. Dip the brush in the alcohol, then dip it in the powder and slop it on. I usually apply one color to half of the wood and the other half of the wood gets the second color. That is easy with strip wood. So with clapboard siding I apply some here and some there making sure it's a good 50/50 split. You can mix the colors as they transition. It's all blended in the end, and the subtle differences in the wood make for a nice effect.



Here is the powder going on wet, it is still being applied, so it won't be so gloppy by the time I am done. Both the powder mixes here look similar in color when wet, but they are very different when dry. The next picture shows how light it can get.



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Once the powder application is completely dry, which can be sped along with a blow dryer or a fan, we can get back to more distressing.

This next step is very important. If you are not looking to deteriorate the wood much further than some knot holes, then you can stop. I am going to take it further than that just because I am going for a certain “look”. This is why it is important to know ahead of time how your final look will “feel”.

It's time for more distressing.

I start with knot holes. I use a drill bit, between #80 to #76. I also use the Monster Nailer to force knot holes, this way since you are forcing the needle through the wood you are causing natural splits in the wood. Obviously “splitting” the wood doesn't always suit the project so I use the drill bits more often.

Now here's the time consuming process... I rotate through the drill bit sizes so the knot holes are all not the same size. You put the holes in the same way, just the hole size changes.

I insert the bit at an angle so the hole is more oval than round. Always follow the direction of the grain with the angle of the bit. Some holes I enter from the right and sometimes from the left, sometimes both directions in the same hole. That way they all look slightly different.

Now you can certainly use the same bit size and make the same hole over and over, no one will probably every notice.



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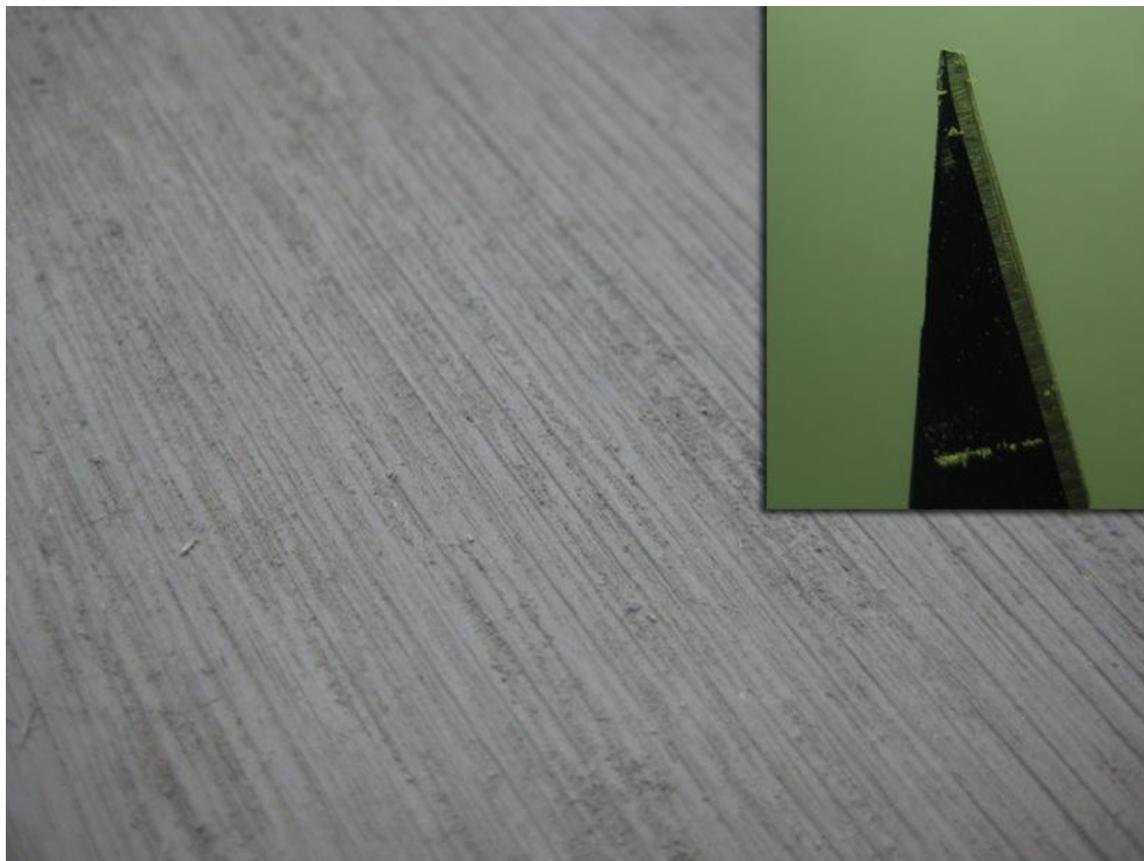
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Just don't over do it... By changing the sizes and the direction of the hole it forces me to be more random than if I was making the same hole over and over. Again that's my "style, so I get my point across and trick the brain into filling the blanks.

I then take an old #11 xacto blade and make some deep cracks (the broken tip help to accentuate the crack). I also use a brand new #11 to make more grain marks into the dried powders. This helps to push more color into the wood as well as add more definition to the over all grain effect.



The picture above shows you my old #11 blade as well as all the light grain lines cut into the powder (yes I am also cutting the wood, just not very deep). Now you see all that powder that is now floating on top of the wood from all the new distressing. You do not want to remove this powder, in fact while you are cutting the grain lines in, be careful to let the powder stay where it lies.

Why... because once you are done with the second round of distressing, you are going to take 99% or 91% Isopropyl Alcohol (clean) and wash that loose powder deep into all the new distress work.

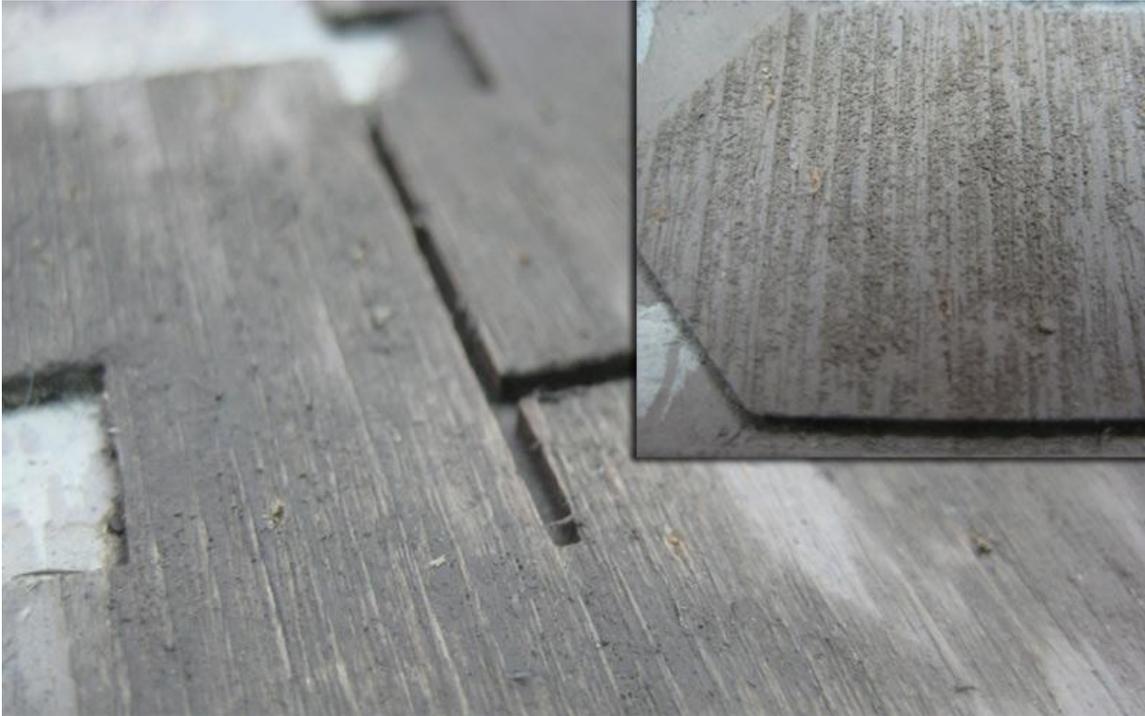
Then let it dry... Below you see the loose powder before and after washing it back into the wood. No need to rub, just pat the area with the wet brush.

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The next step is to add the nail holes. I do not use a pounce wheel. I use the Monster Nailer for all my nail heads and holes. I feel the square impressions the wheel leaves as, is not realist enough for me. I also don't like the perfectly straight line it makes either. I place two holes on each board by hand; I make sure my row of nails is not perfectly straight as well.

You can place the nail holes 2-3 scale feet apart, I used 3.5 feet on this project as it looked better to me, not as many rows of nails... let the mind fill in the blanks.



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I also skip a board every so often so I can make the boards have varying lengths, by making vertical cuts in the board and add nail holes on each side.

Now it is time to remove some of the clapboards by vertically cutting the board and sliding a #17 xacto under and pry the board out. I also places cuts at the top and bottom of the board. Save the pieces to be added back to the wall later.

I only remove a few of these. I also take the #17 xacto and run it against the clapboards to “chip” off pieces of the edges, and even pry up a few boards that don’t come all the way off.



Once I finish the distressing process... I apply a wash of leather dye and alcohol. Now its time to confuse everyone here...

With wood I **do not** use India ink and alcohol. I replace the AI wash with my own formula of Monster Mix Stains and a Black Wash Detail Enhancer. The Detail Enhancer doesn’t darken the surface of the wood (much), but it leaves the cracks and holes nicely highlighted. I also use 3 other types of Monster Mix Stains during this process.



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Now here is a slick trick that I found works well...

I want to enhance the knot holes, so I turn the wall over and apply the Detail Enhancer to the back of the wall... focusing on the knot holes... push the applicator into the back of the knot hole. What this does is force the wash through the hole to the other side. It then stains the hole and the surrounding area with a natural effect.



Once this dries it is time to add the other leather dye washes.

Here is where I use my other 3 Monster Mix Stains, (Silver Sheen, Cool Grey, Jet Black) each has a different look that works well together.

I apply each wash to a separate area of the wall; natural wood does not weather the same. This slightly changes the appearance of the wood giving it a more realistic look. It keeps the mind guessing. Instead of everything looking the same so the mind ignores the effect (not what I want)



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You can see the slightly different shades of black in the smaller image, each dye has a very different final look, but together they blend nicely. You can see once dry some slight variations. We are not done yet.

Now we take my secret weapon... #0000 Steel Wool. Take all your walls and rub them down with the steel wool. Go slow and stop when you are happy. I like to add another light coat of the Detail Enhancer after the steel wool. It blends everything down into the wood, mixes the powders and the dyes.

