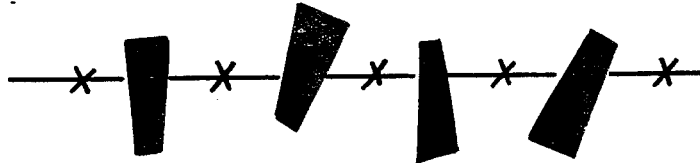
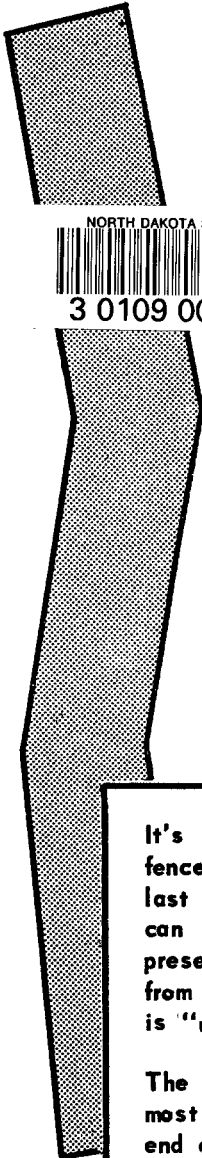


treat

Unseasoned Posts

for longer life



By
John J. Zaylskie
Extension Forester

It's easy to treat green, freshly cut fence posts on the farm so they will last 15 years and probably longer. You can do it with water soluble wood preservatives which work best on posts from March through May (when the sap is "up").

The following pages explain the two most common methods of treatment—the end diffusion or sap stream method, and the osmoplastic method.

S
544.3
.N9
A8
no.315

NDSU LIBRARIES
NDAC *Extension Service, Fargo*
NORTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

END DIFFUSION

Place freshly cut, unpeeled posts in a barrel or trough that contains a water solution of a wood preservative such as zinc chloride, chromated zinc chloride, or copper sulfate. The wood preservative is absorbed into the sapwood of the post and, under favorable conditions will rise the full length.

Equipment Needed

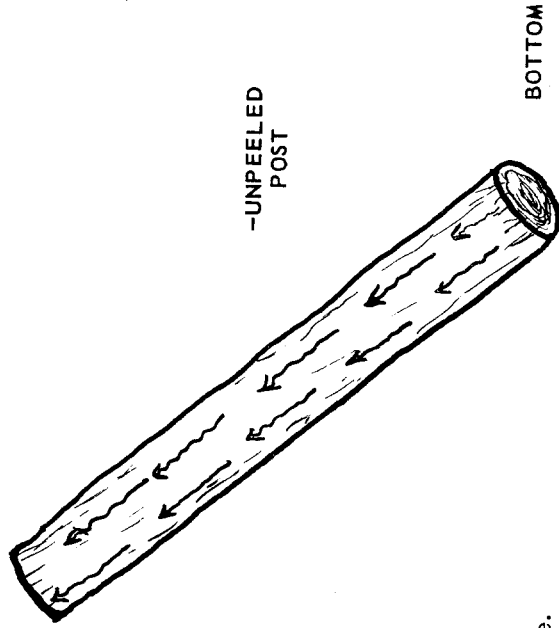
1. A barrel or trough, preferably wood or concrete.
2. Wood preservative. It's best to buy a preservative in powdered or crystal form and of the "technical" grade. The pure form is too expensive and not necessary. You can use any of the following:

Zinc Chloride It is colorless and comparatively low in price. Any of the food colorings or dyes can be used to color it so that you can see its progress in treating the post.

Chromated Zinc Chloride. This chemical is colorless, but can be colored with a food dye.

Copper Sulfate (blue vitrol). The crystals and solution are bluish green and transmit the same color to the treated wood.

3. Freshly cut, green posts with the bark on. This treatment works best on posts cut less than 1 week.



Treating Procedure

1. Half-fill the barrel or trough with water. Count the number of gallons.
2. Add the dry (wood) preservative to the water.

For chromated zinc chloride, or zinc chloride, use 1 pound-size coffee can level full per gallon of water.

For copper sulfate, use 1 heaping pound-size coffee can per gallon of water.

3. Put the posts in, butt end down. If the posts have been cut more than a week, cut 1 inch off the butt end of post before it is placed in the treating solution.

4. Allow the posts to soak for 3 days.

5. Remove posts from treating container and store, butt end up (small end down) for at least 1 week. Posts are then ready for use.

Leave the bark on for best results in treating green posts. Bark keeps the preservative from leaching out. And, if copper sulfate is used as the preservative, bark will keep this very corrosive chemical from eating away the staples and wire.

DOUBLE DIFFUSION

In this method, treat the posts in the same way as in end diffusion. The only difference is that you soak the posts in two different chemicals.

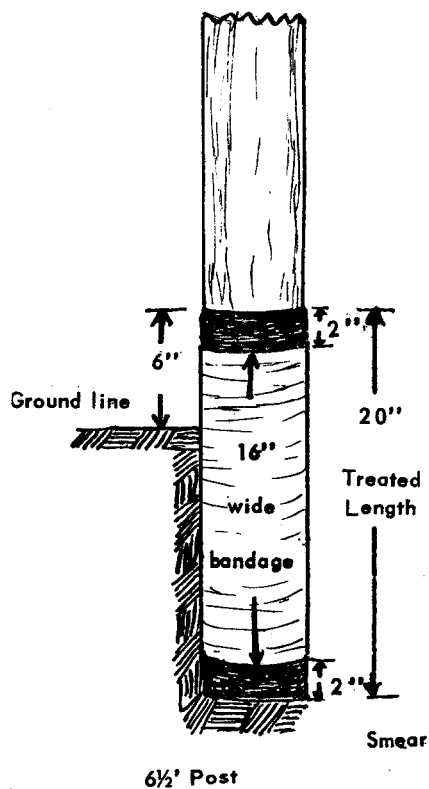
1. First soak the posts in copper sulfate for 2 or 3 days. Mix a heaping pound-size coffee can of the sulfate crystals with each gallon of water.

2. Transfer the posts to a second barrel containing a solution of sodium chromate and soak for 2 or 3 days. Mix 1 level full pound-size coffee can of the sodium chromate powder to each gallon of water.

If you need the posts immediately, then soak them for 2 days in each of the barrels. If you are not in a hurry, allow posts to soak for 3 days in each chemical.

OSMOPLASTIC

The osmoplastic treatment fits in well where you don't have the time it takes to treat posts with other preservatives. With osmoplastic, you can set the posts immediately after treating.



Equipment Needed

1. Osmoplastic preservative salts.
2. A fiber bristled brush (window brush) to apply the preservative.
3. A waterproof wrap or bandage. (This usually comes with the preservative.)
4. Peeled, green and freshly cut posts.

Treating Procedure

1. Brush the osmoplastic on the butt end of the post to a distance of at least 6 inches above the ground line.
2. Apply the wrap or bandage over the treated area, and the post is ready to be placed in the fence line.

One gallon of osmoplastic paste will treat approximately 50 posts having a 5-inch diameter.

Use freshly cut and peeled posts for best results. The greener and wetter the posts, the better the treatment.

In recent years, new formulations of good preservatives have come on the market permitting you to treat fence posts, poles and other wood products in place. Depending on the preservative used wood can be treated that is either green or seasoned, or wet or dry.

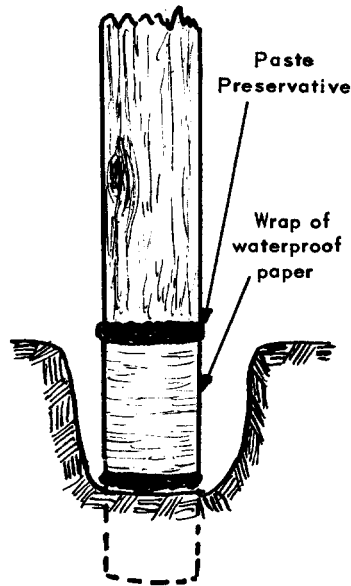
TREATING POSTS, POLES, OR LUMBER THAT HAVE BEEN IN USE

It often happens that a post or pole is in a critical position and can't be removed for replacement, except at considerable work or expense. For example, this could happen to the supports of a pole barn.

There are times when buildings show signs of decay at their sills and joints or other supports. These wood members can be given longer life by the application of a 5 per cent penta solution. Several heavy brush applications can increase the life span of this wood for 5 years or more. Penta containing used crankcase oil is not suitable for where you will paint. The oils bleed through, discoloring the paint.

Wet Posts or Poles, Ground Line Treatment.

In wet areas or where posts or poles are wet at the time of treatment, additional life can be given to them by an application of osmoplastic.



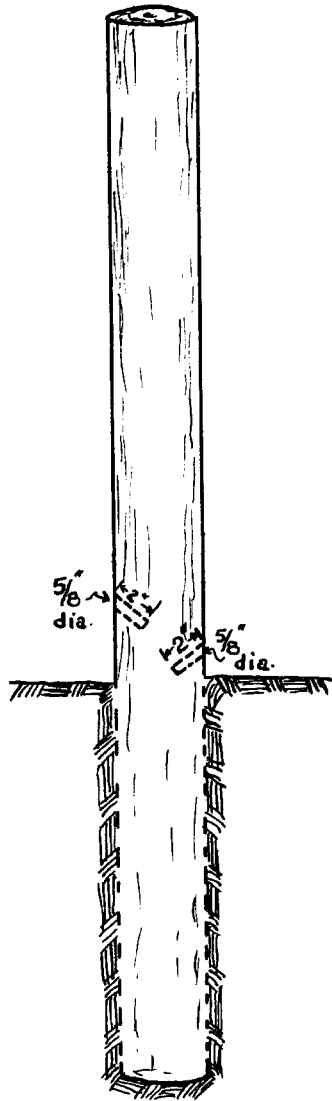
Shovel the dirt away from around the post to a depth of 8 to 12 inches. For a pole, shovel away 12 to 18 inches. Trim away the rotted wood and cover the post with a 1/8 to 1/4-inch layer of osmoplastic. (See diagram for area of application.) Then cover this paste with an oilproof cover, such as saran wrap, polyethylene film or aluminum foil, to prevent the chemical from being absorbed by the soil. Shovel the dirt back around the post or pole after treatment.

Moderately Dry Posts or Poles.

Where the posts or poles are dry, or almost so, use a paste containing penta, or a combination of penta and coal tar creosote. The application is the same as for the osmoplastic. Here too, cover the preservative with waterproof building paper. This material is on the market as a ready -to-use paste.

Above Ground Treatment of Dry Posts or Poles.

If it becomes necessary to treat above-ground areas of posts or poles, first trim away the rotted area, then flush the entire above ground pole or post surface with a 5 per cent solution of penta. (A 5 per cent solution is made by mixing 1 gallon of 40 per cent penta concentrate to 10 gallons of diesel or fuel oil, or used crank-case oil.)



Post prepared for salt treatment.

TREATING GREEN POSTS

This treatment can be used on freshly cut, unpeeled posts that are in the fence line.

For posts 3 to 6 inches in diameter, bore 2 holes 5/8-inch in diameter and 2 inches deep. The holes should be slanting downward. (See diagram.)

Into each hole, place 2 teaspoonsful of the powdered wood preservative, then plug these holes with either a cork or 5/8-inch doweling. A small funnel can be used to pour the chemical into the holes.

The wood preservative is poisonous, and you must prevent livestock from licking it.

Make the wood preservative by mixing together. . . .

1 pound corrosive sublimate
(bichloride of mercury)

1 pound of arsenic
1 pound common salt

This mixture should treat about 40 average-size posts.

CAUTION: This preservative is highly poisonous.