

# MATCHING SAND AND CEMENT MIXES

Quite often it is necessary to cut out damaged bricks from a wall and while it is relatively easy to match the bricks, matching the colour of the sand and cement, or mortar, is no easy task.

There is no science involved in matching a sand and cement mix to that of your existing wall or property, its just a question of trial and error and even a little research is necessary sometimes.

There are many many types of sand and each type will produce a different colour mortar when mixed with cement. Your property may have been built from a local sand or it may have been imported by a developer who got a great deal from a quarry further afield.

If your house is relatively new it may be worth talking to the local builders merchants to see if the development was built using materials ordered through them. You can try to contact the developers or even the actual builders. Life will certainly be easier if you can track down the sand used.

If you can, all that remains is to match the cement content. This is easy enough and involves getting a small cup or other receptacle and measuring the sand accurately. You then make up several mixes starting at 3 sand to 1 cement. Then 3½ to 1, 4 to 1, 4½ to 1 and so on. Do not go past 6 to 1 or the mix will be too weak for ordinary brickwork. Wait until your mini mixes have dried and use the mix closest to the colour of that in your wall.

If you cannot locate the sand then talk to the builders merchants and even the local quarry to find out how many local building sands there are available. Ask if you can have a small sample of each and do the experiment above, but with all the different sands. Its boring and time consuming, but if you do not want your repairs to stand out like a sore thumb, it has to be done!

Some mortars are artificially coloured with a cement dye. This makes the permutations endless. It is important to mix the dye into the cement before you add the water. Dyes are available in a variety of colours from all builders merchants.

We suggest you make up a table, similar to the one below, to keep track of the different mixes.

| MIX NUMBER | SAND TYPE | SAND AMOUNT | CEMENT AMOUNT | DYE ADDED |
|------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|-----------|
|------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|-----------|

|   |             |   |   |   |
|---|-------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | Soft yellow | 3 | 1 | Y |
| 2 |             |   |   |   |
| 3 |             |   |   |   |
| 4 |             |   |   |   |
| 5 |             |   |   |   |