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WEATHER OR NOT



To stain or not to stain, this is a question that often arises, especially for rural homeowners who are looking for the “natural” look. Unfinished woods, such as cedar, do not need a finish to resist rot and bugs. They will change color, however, over time. That can be a good or a bad thing, depending on your point of view. Wood is a natural element in your building’s life. Color change is part of that life.

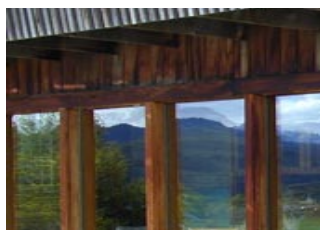
The unstained supporting beams of a carport roof after two years of weathering in a dry climate

To be honest, my husband and I haven’t ever stained, or painted our home or out buildings. The reasons are simple. We like the natural weathering better than we like the workload we would set ourselves up for if we had started staining years ago. We also aren’t inclined towards chemicals in our living environment. Our Methow climate is bone dry so it isn’t hard to keep the wood clean. Moisture, UV rays and airborne dust are the main culprits when it comes to natural color change. In the lower right corner you can see that even after 20 years, the west side of the house looks as brown as if it has been stained regularly. Yet where water has made contact, the graying will be apparent, such as on the railings. The window wall at the bottom of the page, has seen some minor water drips and has an uneven discoloration. The outside stairs of the garage, mid-left, have had snow and rain hit them hard, so they are fully gray. Above that, you see a contrast of cedar’s natural colors. A carved post stands in the weather; the siding behind it protected by an overhang.



The cedar industry recommends that you immediately stain, or paint, your outdoor products, either before you put the product into place or directly after. The wood self-seals as it ages, making penetration more difficult the longer it goes without stain. Each builder/owner makes his choice, to allow nature to take its course or to set the staining/painting precedent right off the bat. What you see pictured here, the fully weathered gray, has taken about 15 years to develop.

A third choice is to bleach your product to a natural gray immediately. This will take away the variable and set the wood color to its final conclusion. Bear Creek Lumber can offer you literature about finishing options and they can also be found on the website as well. Its all a matter of choice for the wood product owner.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Bergerson's are located in Northwest Oregon, at the mouth of the Columbia River. The area is known to mariners as the graveyard of the Pacific. Each year we have many winds with rain in excess of 50 M.P.H., and have had some at 140.

The need for good water proofing at window and door openings is a necessity. I took photo's of an A-1 builder named Rich Elstrom installing windows on the oceanfront. We will be posting this on our web site. If you need this information sooner, I can email or us mail to you.

The photo's will show the process of good rough opening preparation. First he will put 30# felt strips 8" to 10" wide at bottom and both sides of window opening on the sheathing. Next, place a pan at bottom of rough opening. This will feed any water penetration back out onto the paper. You can use a soldered metal pan, a plastic pan, or use ice and snow shield with the peel and sticky back to form a pan. Using this last method make sure to put a 1/2" X 1/2" strip at inside of opening, and form the ice and snow over it. Seal at the sides and form out onto the paper. If the window has exterior trim on it, back caulk with a urethane caulking and place in opening. Place a good metal zee head flashing over the top exterior trim, and caulk under zee metal. Adjust window and fasten with non corrosive screws. It will be good to counter sink the screws and plug the holes. Of course, the paper on the whole job must lap both side and top in order to shed the water. Remember, water runs downhill and a good job of papering will save you. It will come as no surprise to people used to coastal conditions, that the most common leak is at the bottom corner of windows so extra care needs to be taken at this point. We use an L shaped metal to close the daylight opening between the rough in and overall at these lower corners. This gives us a backer for caulking under siding.

Please give me some feed back or your comments. I will share them or improve our opinions.

Thanks for listening -

Chuck Bergerson

Bergerson Cedar Windows

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On April 16, 2002 a letter was sent to President Bush as a joint project from the Sierra Club, the National Forest Protection Alliance and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group signed by over 200 scientists from across the country asking him to end the practice of commercial logging on National Forests because past logging has not only degraded fish and wildlife habitat, but also other services such as recreation and clean water.

I would agree that some of the logging practices of the past have had some detrimental effects on the environment, but I totally disagree that commercial logging should end on National Forests.

Not all scientists agree with the Sierra Club that a ban on commercial logging on the National Forests is the best policy for the forests, and to meet the needs of the American people. Here are some statements from interviews with scientists that were published in "Evergreen" the magazine of the Evergreen Foundation-Winter 2000 that have differing views than those presented by the Sierra Club letter: "The proposed harvest ban--however well intended--chases an unachievable ideal. It says that if we leave forests alone, the result will be a more natural landscape. But reality presents a much different picture. Our forests are byproducts of 12,000 years of dominance by Native Americans, mainly through their use of fire. Removing human influences--by imposing a harvest ban in National Forests--would have horrendous impacts on native forests and species. Many early and mid-succession plant and animal communities would be lost, creating very unnatural landscapes, a significant decline in biological diversity and a significant increase in the size of wildfires, resulting in further losses to native forests." Tom Bonnicksen, Ph.D., founding member, International Society of Ecological Restoration, Professor of Forestry, Texas A&M; "For ecological, biological and moral reasons, I oppose a ban on timber harvesting in National Forests" Jack Ward Thomas, Ph.D., wildlife biologist and former chief of the U.S. Forest Service; "I know many people distrust thinning, fearing a return to the days when too much harvesting was occurring in National Forests, but I don't see how it could happen. Far greater risks lie in accepting the idea that the best way to protect National Forests is to set them aside in no-harvest reserves. I'm a wilderness fan, and would favor adding appropriate lands to the Wilderness system, but major portions of the National Forest System are not suitable for Wilderness designation, and ought to be managed for multiple benefits, including commercial timber production." Chadwick Oliver, Ph.D., forest ecologist at the University of Washington.

... As we try to come together in collaboration to effectively manage our public lands, it is sad to see an organization with so much power to influence the public... asking for adoption of Federal land management policy that is both scientifically and economically unjustified and harmful to the forests and the public interest.

Dean Sturtz

Columbia Falls, MT

Editor's note: We had to shorten Mr. Stolze's letter to fit this publication. The full text is published on our website www.bearcreeklumber.com (TIMBERLINE current issue) if you would like to see it.

INDUSTRY NEWS

New-home sales shot up 8.1 percent in May, the biggest advance in six months, as low mortgage rates motivated buyers.

The larger-than-expected increase pushed up sales of new single-family homes to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.03 million, a record monthly level, the Commerce Department reported yesterday.

The housing market was one of the economy's few bright spots during the recession, in large part because of low mortgage rates. Low rates are continuing to keep the housing sector healthy.

Another factor motivating buyers: Solid appreciation in housing values, which offers people an attractive investment, especially as the stock market has been weak, economists say.

By region, sales of new homes in May jumped 26.4 percent in the Northeast to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 67,000. In the South, sales rose 10.6 percent to a rate of 482,000, and in the West, they went up 4.3 percent to a rate of 289,000. Sales in the Midwest increased 2.7 percent to a rate of 190,000.

BUILDING INDUSTRY FACING INSURANCE WOES

Many remodelers are getting a nasty surprise when they renew their insurance policies this year, finding that insurance cost are increasing at a much higher rate than in previous years.

Part of the problem is being felt by anyone with an insurance policy: Most insurers in the United States are facing massive payouts due to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and those costs are being passed on to the policy holders, both businesses and private individuals. The general economic downturn has also caused a rise in premiums as insurers try to make up for a decline in investment profits, which had kept prices lower for the last few years.

There are also some industry-specific causes for the spike in costs. Many insurers are becoming leery of covering the building industry - especially providing liability insurance - because of the rising number of lawsuits against remodelers and builders. The biggest cause for suits has been mold, which already led to several multi-million judgments against construction companies.

As the economy improves, some of the price pressure may decrease, but mold and the fallout from 9/11, will most likely have a long term effect on prices. One answer being advocated by some in the industry, is self insurance on a national or local level through trade associations or other groups, but there have been no widespread implementations of that solution yet.

Remodelers and builders are facing across-the-board insurance rate increases as companies try to recoup losses from 9/11 and other sources.

CONSTRUCTION AREA

Please Be
Careful

PRESERVING TREES DURING LAND DEVELOPMENT

Those of us who love trees often bemoan their destruction by construction projects, whether by the building of a

shopping center or installation of a sidewalk. We may criticize heavy equipment operators for excavation through a tree's root system, or builders for chopping branches that are in their way. Yet, urban foresters and horticulturists must bring this expertise to the process, and work with development professionals (architects, engineers, building contractors, etc.) to improve the situation. Unfortunately, few of us are prepared to apply our knowledge to the development process.

Now we have a reference book to guide us through the process. **Tree and Development: A Technical Guide to Preservation of Trees During Land Development** was written by Nelda Matheny and James Clark of HortScience, Inc., an urban forestry consulting firm based in Pleasanton, California. This book is based on their years of experience working with developers, and public works departments.

The best thing about this book is that it goes beyond generalities, and gives specific tools. For example, we all know that running heavy equipment over a root zone is harmful to a tree, but how do we intelligently determine the extent of the area around the tree that must be protected? The drip line method is the most common way of determine a tree protection zone,

While that method may work well for trees with broad canopies, it is inadequate for narrow, upright trees, according to Matheny and Clark. Therefore they provide a formula for calculating the optimal tree protection zone. The formula considers the specie's tolerance to construction impacts, the tree's age, and its size.

"Trees and Development" also provides methods and treatments for minimizing construction impacts, sample construction specifications, and guidelines for preparing reports and plans. This book begins with primers on tree biology, and the development process, and then carries the reader through all phases of a project-planning, design, construction, and post construction management.



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