Incense Cedar lumber, one of the most durable and decay-resistant of native American woods, is produced from a forest tree found in California, southern Oregon and western Nevada. General John Fremont discovered the tree in 1847 in the upper Sacramento Valley during one of his expeditions through the West. The total sawtimber stand of Incense Cedar in its three-state growth region is estimated as thirteen billion board feet. Post-war lumber production averages approximately 70 million board feet annually. Incense Cedar lumber is used for general building purposes, in the manufacture of pencils and for various fabricated products such as Venetian blinds, toy stock, etc.

Incense Cedar is generally known in the lumber industry as one of the 12 native American woods, is produced from a forest tree found in California, southern Oregon and western Nevada. General John Fremont discovered the tree in 1847 in the upper Sacramento Valley during one of his expeditions through the West.

Botanical Classification
Incense Cedar’s botanical name is Libocedrus decurrens. Under average conditions, mature trees are 20 to 30 inches in diameter and 75 to 110 feet in height. Unusual specimens up to 150 feet tall and six feet in diameter are sometimes found. The tree is rarely found in pure stands but generally grows intermingled with Ponderosa Pine, Sugar Pine, Douglas Fir and White Fir. Live trees of sawtimber size are subject to fungus attacks that cause cavities in the heartwood but the fungus action ceases when the trees are felled so the lumber is not thereafter imperiled. Incense Cedar is a very handsome tree of columnar or pyramidal form with its beauty and stability to make it extraordinarily suitable for this use.

Grading
Incense Cedar lumber is graded under current published grading rules of the Western Wood Products Association. It is separated into Select, Common, Framing, Factory (Shop) and Pencil Stock grades. There are three Select grades - B & Better Select, C Select and D Select. They may be combined into a single grade of D Select & Better. Common grades are five in number ranging from No. 1 Common which contains all sound knotted stock and a minimum of season checks, light stain or equivalent characteristics down to No. 5 Common, the lowest recognized grade and one which admits all characteristics known in lumber provided the piece is of usable size and quality. The first three Common grades are sometimes combined and shipped as No. 3 & Better Common. Framing and Factory lumber are graded according to the rules for all species published by the Association. Incense Cedar Pencil Stock is graded under the rules published by the Association.

Distribution
From mills located in California and southern Oregon, Incense Cedar is distributed throughout the United States. It is usually available in mixed cars together with an assortment of the woods of the Western Woods Region and is frequently available in mixed car shipments together with an assortment of one or more of the pines and others of its sister species.

Roof Decking
In recent years, roof decking has become one of Incense Cedar’s favorite applications. The wood’s natural fine insulation combines with its beauty and stability to make it extraordinarily suitable for this use.

Properties
The wood of Incense Cedar is non-resinous. Sapwood is white or cream-colored and the heartwood is light brown or light reddish-brown. Annual rings are moderately distinct and in average material there are generally 20 to 30 per inch.

Facts about Incense Cedar
Incense Cedar trees average about 20 to 30 inches in diameter but unusual specimens are sometimes found up to six feet through and 150 feet tall.

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better siding materials. Its light weight and easy insulation quality, has made it one of the country’s coupled with its fine dimensional stability and high conductivity in British thermal units per hour) which makes it one of the finest wood insulators and leads to its widespread use in a variety of lumber construction use.

Incense Cedar in

is the high dimensional stability of Incense Cedar. Its cells. The wood has a spicy odor characteristic of all cedars. It weighs 24 pounds per cubic foot at 12 percent moisture content, making it one of the lightest of all softwoods, and has a specific gravity of 0.37. Perhaps its outstanding characteristic, and one which leads to its widespread use in a variety of lumber products, is its exceptional resistance to decay and high durability when exposed to weather. The Forest Products Laboratory classes Incense Cedar with woods that hold paint longest and suffer least when protection against weathering becomes inadequate.

Second only to decay resistance in lumber importance is the high dimensional stability of Incense Cedar. Its volumetric shrinkage when dried from a green state down to 12 to 15 percent moisture content is only 3.8 percent close to the bottom of the 3.4-6.6 range of commercially important softwoods.

Incense Cedar has a very low “K” factor (thermal conductivity in British thermal units per hour) which makes it one of the finest wood insulators and leads to its use for sheathing, siding, floor and roof decking and other building uses where protection against heat and cold is important.

The species is rated in the topmost of three groups in workability with hand tools and it also machines smoothly and easily to smooth, even surfaces. It glues easily under virtually every gluing condition, fitting it for use as pencil stock, into which a considerable portion of the annual production goes. Care is recommended in selection of fasteners; blunt-point nails are recommended. Nail-holding ability is good in relation to its light weight.

The heartwood of Incense Cedar requires no preservative against decay, but the sapwood, in common with all other species, requires treatment when used. Sapwood logs are used in contact with the ground as poles or posts. The sapwood is easily penetrated with all standard commercial preservatives.

Uses

Incense Cedar is manufactured into lumber, pencil stock and posts. The lumber is used for a variety of building purposes, including framing and finish, and for re-manufacture into Venetian blinds, toy stock and many specialty products.

Bulk of the lumber production is in Common grades with some Selects, Dimension and Factory (Shop) grades. Incense Cedar lumber is generally available in 1” thickness in lengths from 6’ to 20’. Widths run 4” and wider in specified and random widths. The lumber is first seasoned to a low moisture content, then cut into squares 8” or multiples of 8” in length and the multitude of other miscellaneous articles in construction use.

Panelling and Interior Finish

The rich, brown-red color, small, sound knots and graceful grain combine to form in Incense Cedar an unusual and distinctive paneling and woodworking material. In its clear grades, particularly, Incense Cedar has gained favor for interiors in the clean-lined modern style.

For paneled ceilings or walls it carries the inherent features of wood’s beauty, resistance to day-by-day wear and easy maintenance. Its excellent paint-holding property and stain-receptive surfaces make it the basis for the user’s choice of an infinite variety of color tones. Incense Cedar’s high dimensional stability and excellent insulation quality furnish additional features to the home where it is installed. It is available in a broad range of paneling patterns to express virtually any decoration theme desired.

A novel and increasingly popular paneling article is “Pecky Cedar,” manufactured from pieces containing small apertures where the live tree had been attacked by parasite vegetation. The vegetation dies and disappears when the tree is felled, leaving no threat to the lumber or the home where it is used. The pleasant fragrance of Incense Cedar enhances its value as closet lining.

Sheathing and Subflooring

For these two important building purposes, insulation, dimensional stability and resistance to decay are primary considerations. Sheathing and subflooring must stay in place, must provide as much insulation as possible and must endure under alternate drying and moisture conditions caused by condensation either from interior heating equipment or from the ground in the case of basementless homes.

Incense Cedar provides all three qualities in the fullest measure obtainable from any wood material. Its workability and light weight furnish bonus qualities in handling during construction. Especially recommended are the No. 3 and No. 4 Common grades for they possess ample strength for the purposes involved at pronounced economies.

The species is also produced in dimension lumber for studs, plates, posts, headers, fire stops and other purposes. The dimensional stability, light weight and ability to take paints and varnishes well are reasons for widespread use of Incense Cedar in Venetian blinds, facades, picture frames and paneling.

Pencil Stock

Strangeness of grain, softness and ease of whittling fit Incense Cedar ideally to the manufacture of pencils. The lumber is first seasoned to a low moisture content, then cut into squares 8” or multiples of 8” in length and equal to the thickness of the piece in width. The light weight and easy workability of the species add to its desirability for pencils.

Miscellaneous

Again, the superior resistance to decay of Incense Cedar is the primary reason for its use in a multitude of miscellaneous building purposes around the home, farm or in industry. Where humidity is high or moisture is ever-present, the species gives lasting services without little or no maintenance. Lower common grades are particularly efficient and economical for most miscellaneous purposes.

For greenhouse benches, flower boxes, nursery flats, boardwalks, mud sills, posts, rafters and window sash, it is unsurpassed in durability. Ice houses, irrigation and drain boxes, grave lining, casket shook, shallow ditch shoring and duck boards are other uses for Incense Cedar where decay conditions are always present.

Fence boards, pickets, chicken houses, rabbit hutches, bird houses, duck boards, garden summer houses, flower and garden stakes, trellises, beach dressing and other purposes where high humidity and moisture are always present.