

Mountain Pine Beetle: Industry Challenge Market Challenges

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Outline

- Overview
- Focus on 2 messages
- Define framework for presentation
- General marketing comments
- Message #1
- Message #2
- Summary

OVERVIEW



- Information Overflow
- Focus on 2 messages
- Customer Driven
- Long Term View

Message # 1

- Beetle transmitted Bluestain lumber does not impact the use of lumber in building construction.

Message # 2

- The Industry needs to proactively educate our customers on the impact of Bluestain lumber.

Framework

- Focus on SPF dimension lumber for structural applications
- Focus on 2 simple messages to be part of your marketing plan
- NOT going to review other applications
- NOT going to present a specific marketing plan

General Market Comments

- Customer driven message
- Complex world

Message # 1

- Beetle transmitted Bluestain lumber does not impact the use of lumber in building construction.

Properties of Lumber with Beetle-Transmitted Bluestain.

Users of lumber are probably familiar with bluestain. Some may wonder if the amount and type of stain transmitted by the mountain pine beetle affects the wood in any way.

Comprehensive testing recently confirmed that beetle-transmitted bluestain has no practical effect on strength properties or gluing characteristics. Neither does the bluestain affect the adhesion of furniture finishes. The stain causes some possibly beneficial changes to dimensional stability, checking and permeability.¹

¹. Forintek Canada Corp – Wood Protection Bulletin July 2003

Properties of Lumber with Beetle-Transmitted Bluestain

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Regular customers for western spruce-pine-fir lumber have probably seen some bluestain, a subtle streaking in the lumber. At the moment, bluestain is more prevalent than in the past, because British Columbia is currently experiencing a large natural outbreak of mountain pine beetle (MPB). Native to the forests of western North America, the MPB attacks several species of pine trees, including ones commonly used for construction lumber and panels. The beetle carries with it a staining fungus that weakens the tree's defences which allows the insect to lay eggs under the bark.

While the beetle stays just under the bark, the fungus can grow throughout the sapwood (the outer part of the tree) feeding on sugars, carbohydrates and other nutrients contained within the wood cells. As the fungus spreads, it leaves behind a permanent blue or grey stain that colours products made from this wood. Neither the beetle nor the fungus eats the wood structure itself.



Bluestain fungi are not mold, nor do they cause decay (rot) problems. They are considered harmless with respect to both wood products and people, and are typically dead by the time the wood products leave the manufacturer. The wood can be handled exactly as with non-bluestained wood. Because it looks slightly different, questions are sometimes asked about bluestained wood. Forintek performed a series of tests to address any possible marketplace concerns and to provide a scientific basis for the anecdotal evidence that bluestained wood is equivalent to non-bluestained wood.

Message # 2

- The Industry needs to proactively educate our customers on the impact of Bluestain lumber.

Frequently Asked Questions about Bluestain on Canadian Wood Products

You may have noticed a larger proportion of western spruce-pine-fir lumber or plywood that contains blue streaks. This discolouration is called bluestain and is associated with the activities of the mountain pine bark beetle. In BC a lot of trees that have recently been attacked by this beetle are being processed into lumber and plywood.²

²*Forintek Canada Corp – Wood Protection Bulletin July 2005*

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You may have noticed a larger proportion of western spruce-pine-fir lumber or plywood that contains blue streaks. This discoloration is called bluestain and is associated with the activities of the mountain pine bark beetle. In BC a lot of trees that have recently been attacked by this beetle are being processed into lumber and plywood. This document has been produced to answer some of the questions that have been raised in the market about bluestained wood. The answers are based on reviews of the scientific literature by Forintek Canada Corp. scientists.

What is bluestain?

A common blue-toned wood discolouration in softwoods, especially pines, that is caused by a type of harmless fungus. Bluestain occurs only in the sapwood—the outer part of the tree, closest to the bark—this is why a piece of lumber may be stained only in a very distinct section of the wood. Bluestain fungi are usually carried by forest insects, mainly bark beetles, that are common in the forest and in areas where logs are stored. When the insects land on logs that have bark partially removed, or when they attack standing trees or logs with bark still on, the fungi can germinate and grow into the sapwood. While the fungi penetrate deep into the sapwood, the bark beetles do not. Beetles are no longer present in finished products as the bark is removed during processing.

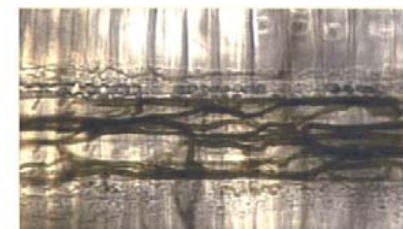
Some people mistakenly confuse bluestain with mold, which can grow on the wood surface after it is processed. Under the microscope you would see that the bluestain is caused by embedded dark coloured threads of fungus growing in part of the wood tissue. The threads are found mainly in the horizontal “ray” cells that the tree uses for storage of nutrients upon which the fungus feeds. The fungus is so intensely coloured that it makes the whole of the wood which it has colonised appear blue/grey, even though only a few fungal threads may be present.



Bluestained logs



Wood products from bluestained logs



*Threads of bluestain fungi in wood as viewed under the microscope
(Source: Paprican)*

Summary

- Recommend focus on 2 messages
- Support our Customer's needs for information and education
- Take a long term view



Questions?

