

TECHNICAL NOTES

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY

U. S. FOREST SERVICE

MADISON, WISCONSIN

LO-11

290

No. A-4

PREVENTING DAMAGE TO LOGS IN STORAGE

Logs stored on skidways or left in the woods during the summer months may be damaged in a number of ways, principally through sap staining, insect attack, decay, and checking. Certain species of wood are more susceptible to injury than others, and the extent of the injury is also dependent on the time of cutting, the climate, and the storage conditions. The possible financial loss and amount which can profitably be expended to prevent it will be influenced according to the United States Forest Products Laboratory at Madison, Wisconsin by the value of the logs, the purposes for which they are to be used, and the probable extent of the injury. Where conditions permit, one or more of the following methods may be found useful in minimizing the loss.

Storing under water will prevent blue stain, checking, insect attack, and decay. (The logs would, of course, be subject to marine-borer attack in salt or brackish water along the sea coast where these pests are active.) Wood of any species completely submerged in water will resist decay indefinitely. Alternate wetting and drying, however, favor decay.

Storing on skids in such a way that the air can circulate freely around each log will prevent the accumulation of moisture and thus retard decay. It will favor checking, however, and, unless the bark is removed, will have little effect in preventing insect attack. The skids should be located where there is good air circulation, and they should be raised off the ground. Weeds and brush should be cut down.

Peeling the bark completely from the logs will do much to eliminate insect attack and retard decay, by removing the protection required by many insects, and by allowing the logs to dry more rapidly. It will favor checking, however.

Painting the ends of the logs with paints of the proper kind will very materially retard the loss of moisture and thus retard end checking. If the logs are peeled

and properly piled on skids, painting should not increase the danger from decay or sap stain. A yellow ochre or barn paint will do fairly well for this purpose.

Painting the peeled surfaces with coal-tar creosote will be useful in preventing sap decay, and if applied soon enough may be effective in retarding sap stain. Any grade of creosote in common use for wood preservation will be suitable, and expensive oils are unnecessary.

All the methods described except water storage may be employed at the same time and to good advantage if circumstances justify the expense.