



Thuja plicata
Western Red Cedar

Cedar Siding: Grades, Seasoning, Patterns & Textures

Wood siding is one of the most versatile of all materials that can be installed as exterior siding due in part to its ability to accept a variety of finishes. This opens the door to unlimited possibilities of color choices and appearances.

Grades

One of the most popular species of wood siding is Western Red Cedar because it has dimensional stability, holds finishes extremely well and is naturally durable. Western Red Cedar grades can be generally categorized into clear grades and knotty grades.

Clear, premium grades have few adverse characteristics (knots, splits) etc. For bevel or clapboard siding, the highest grade available is *Clear VG Heart* (VG stands for vertical grain) followed by *A Bevel*. For all other patterns, cedar may be found in a variety of premium grades, including *Clear Heart*, *A Grade*, *B & Better Select* and *C & Better Select*. Because of

their superior quality and appearance, the clear grades are generally more expensive and less common than the knotty grades.

Knotty grades have larger, more frequent knots and other characteristics. *#2 Common*, *#3 Common*, *Select Knotty* and *Quality Knotty* are recognized agency grades that are available. The grade of cedar used may influence finish selection. Clear grades accept paint, stain or water repellents easily, while stains or water repellents are recommended for coating knotty grades.

Seasoning

Cedar siding can be purchased as unseasoned (green), 19% maximum moisture content (S-dry), or 15% maximum moisture content (MC15). Typically, the clear grades are kiln dried to MC15 specifications, while knotty grades are normally sold as S-Dry or green. If unseasoned siding is purchased, it must be allowed to dry for 30 days prior to finishing and installation, while dry sidings should shrink less and can be finished immediately.

Moisture content should be below 15% prior to application of a finish, allowing it to penetrate and dry properly. Stains or water repellents do not form films like paints and are therefore preferred when siding must be finished prior to being allowed to dry completely.

Patterns

Cedar siding is available in a variety of patterns with bevel or clapboard being the most common. *Channel rustic*, *shiplap* and *tongue & groove* patterns are also popular. Installation differs for each, and each has applications for which it is best suited. Bevel patterns can only be installed horizontally, but they are more forgiving when it comes to shrinkage. Channel rustic, tongue & groove and shiplap patterns can be installed either horizontally or vertically, but some require close attention to detail and seasoning. As a rule, the narrower and thicker the pattern, the better the performance.

Textures

Siding is available in smooth, rough or saw-textured surfaces. When used with clear or semi-transparent finishes, a smooth surface will show the grain patterns and color variations in the wood more than other textures. These surfaces

(Continued on back)

Cedar Siding (Continued from front)

also absorb less finish and typically require more maintenance than other textures. In contrast, rough and saw-textured surfaces can absorb about twice as much finish as smooth-textured surfaces and, when protected by stain- and water-repellent finishes, need to be recoated much less frequently.

Wood siding and wood finishes go hand in hand in providing consumers with virtually unlimited choices for appearance. By properly selecting the grade, seasoning, pattern and texture of the siding and by protecting it from moisture, sun and mold with a quality finish, wood siding can last for many decades.

General Categories <small>See Technical Bulletin #1613/A-2/Rev. 10-92 for details.</small>		GRADES			Grade Rule Paragraph Numbers for Reference & Specifying		
		Western Species		Cedar	WWPA ²	WCLIB ³	NLGA ⁴
		Selects ¹	Finish	Western & Canadian			
ALL PATTERNS	PREMIUM GRADES	C Select	Sawed Bevel	Clear Heart ⁵ A Grade ⁶	3011	102	2001
		D Select			3012	102	2002
Additional Grades for Bevel Patterns	Premium	Sawed Bevel ⁷	Clear VG Heart ⁵ A Bevel ⁶	2111	100-101	2011	
	Knotty			Dressed Bevel ⁷	B Bevel Premium	2112	100-101
C Bevel		2113	100-101		2013		
ALL PATTERNS	KNOTTY GRADES	Common	Standard	Select Knotty ⁸ Quality Knotty ⁸	3013		2014
		#2 Common			3012	110-111	2012
		#3 Common			4013	110-111	2013
		#4 Common			3014	110-111	2014
		#5 Common			3014	110-111	2014

¹ The select grades under the terms knotty and knotted are WWPA Rule 100-101 and are available in both wet and dry. Refer to Western Lumber Grade Rules.

² Western Wood Products Association of America's Western Lumber Grading Rules.

³ West Coast Lumber Inspection Bureau's Western Lumber Grading Rules.

⁴ National Lumber Grades Authority's Southern Lumber Grading Rules.

⁵ Select knotty grades may be used for a wide range of applications. The most common is for exterior use in applications where high quality is desired.

⁶ The grades used in this table are the most widely available grades. There are other grades available, but they are not shown here.

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The grade names in bold face type are the most widely available grades. There are other grades available, but they are not shown here.



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Information courtesy of WWPA, "Specifying Lumber" 1613/A-2/Rev. 10-92

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