

Real Cedar Shakes & Shingles

The Myths & the Facts

by Randy Engh, manager of the British Columbia Shake and Shingle Association

It's interesting to watch the current truck ads on television with the year end approaching and the big push to clear out this year's models. Each of the manufacturers exalt their advantages, such as horsepower, torque, towing, and payload capacity. All this promotion is very professionally accomplished without any negative slurs or misleading information about the competitor's pickup.

Unfortunately, this is not the case with the roofing product industry. Never has there been such an effort to emulate the beauty and performance of real, natural cedar roofing, even up to trade marking our product names, while at the same time presenting negative misleading information about cedar shakes and shingles. This paradox only reproves the reality that real cedar shakes and shingles are one of the finest and most sought after roofing products available. While imitation may be the best form of flattery, misleading information is not, and the misinformation tends to flow through the industry and get repeated enough to become thought of as general fact. So once again, the cedar shake and shingle industry is pleased to identify the myths and clarify the facts about real cedar shakes and shingles.

Factory Pressure Fire Retardant Treatment has been available for over 40 years. Time tested and accepted by National Building Codes, cedar shakes and shingles must pass more rigorous fire testing than any other roofing product. They are permanently treated and warrantied, and are available in Class C, Class B, and even Class A system. The fear factor used by our competitors of those old fire-hazard shakes, to steer homeowners

away from reroofing with real fire-treated cedar shakes is a deceptive and misleading myth.

Factory Pressure Preservative Treatment has also been available for over 40 years. The process and preservative used is so successful that there has never been a warranty claim or failure of pressure preservative treated shakes or shingles to date. With pressure preservative treated shakes and shingles the so-called constant upkeep claim is just another myth. In any case, real cedar roofing stands up to the rigors of walking on it with broom and hose to clean it better than most other roofing materials if occasional cleaning is required. See our Care and Maintenance video on our website for instructions explaining our easy, effective recommendations.

Another myth put forward is the claim that our industry is now using inferior second growth cedar because the old growth is all gone. Cedar growth rings are easy to see on the butt end of the shake, most often they are so close together that the annual growth rings can't be counted. So much for the second growth claim and the misleading statement that you just can't get old growth cedar anymore.

A myth that is easy to bust is the claim that the quality of cedar shakes has gone down and you can't get good product anymore. The labels on the bundle should indicate the International Code Council Evaluation Service report number, the third party inspection service that monitors the grading of the shakes, as well indicate if that inspection service subscribes to the ICC- ES program. This information on the label is easy to locate and provides the assurance of proper grading and adherence to the UBC grading and quality standards. Simply demand ICC-ES third party graded product.

That there are no installation instructions for shakes available also isn't true. The B.C. Shake and Shingle Association has produced the *Installation Instructions for Western Red Cedar Shakes and Shingles*, in English as well

as Spanish. This training tool is on our website along with our other videos, and also available through your distributor, free for the asking.

Using cedar shakes isn't good for the environment, is a myth that has been answered by nature itself, as the original logging in areas where cedar grows has been naturally regenerated into beautiful forests again. While other roofing products are produced by permanently extracting natural resources, our world recognized forestry stewardship ensures true sustainability. Production of real cedar shakes and shingles uses the lowest amount of energy and emits less pollution than any roofing product. While other imitations, including the recycled ones, are adding to greenhouse gas and pollution during production, our replanted forests are busy consuming carbon. Because cedar has a superior insulating value compared to other imitations, it keeps homes warmer in winter and cooler in summer, saving money and energy consumption.

Cedar isn't available in our area anymore is another myth. Cedar shake and shingle factories are ready, willing, and able to deliver less than truckload quantities anywhere in the world. Your distributor does have access to "just in time" supply, from one roof quantity to full truckload, with price points that are very competitive, only a phone call away.

Cedar shakes and shingles, proven for over a century, still make the finest roof available. That's why there are so many imitations out there trying, but unable, to duplicate the beauty, benefits, and performance of real, natural cedar. Next time you see an ad putting down real cedar shakes and shingles, or hear a misinformed comment about cedar, you will be able to separate the myths from the facts.

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