

TECHNICAL NOTES

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY

U. S. FOREST SERVICE

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PILING OAK DIMENSION TO REDUCE SEASON CHECKS

Chair manufacturers who are accustomed to pile and air season dimension stock are aware that surface checking is a source of a lot of trouble and expense. One manufacturer states that 50 per cent of his cabinet repair costs are due to season checks.

Season checks, particularly in plain-sawed oak, are too often regarded by the practical lumberman as a necessary evil. The Forest Products Laboratory contends that these wasteful and costly checks can be prevented during yard seasoning simply by careful piling.

The primary cause of the trouble is that the plain-sawed surfaces of the stock are left exposed to the drying action of the sun and winds. The surfaces tend to shrink as they dry, but the interior of the stock, which is not drying so rapidly, resists the shrinkage on the surface. The result is a surface check.

To prevent surface checks, it is necessary to reduce and control the rate of drying from the plain-sawed surfaces. This can easily be done by proper piling. Each piece should be turned so that the quarter-sawed surfaces are on the top and bottom next to the stickers, and the plain-sawed surfaces, or the sides of the pieces, brought close together in the pile.

The effect of this method of piling is to retard the circulation and hence the drying rate on the plain-sawed surfaces and to stimulate the circulation and drying rate on the quarter-sawed surfaces. It is quite permissible for the quarter-sawed surface to be subjected to the more severe drying condition, because surface checking does not occur to any extent in these surfaces.