

TECHNICAL NOTE NUMBER 166

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY - U. S. FOREST SERVICE - MADISON, WISCONSIN

THE YELLOW STAIN ON HARDWOOD

A troublesome defect often found in hardwood lumber is that recognized as yellow stain. It is usually distinguished by a pale yellow color, occurs generally in streaks, and is detected most easily when the wood is surfaced, although at times it is present without any discoloration of the wood. Its first symptom may be a moldy appearance of the wood. Yellow stain has been observed by the Forest Products Laboratory in hickory and maple tool handles, in birch veneer, and in oak airplane propellers and wheel spokes. It is classified in the *Pencillium divaricatum* group of fungi.

The only damage that yellow stain is positively known to do is to mar the appearance of the finished product, since it usually penetrates the wood so deeply that it can not be surfaced off. It is probable, however, that the fungus actually weakens the wood, and the use of yellow-stained lumber for airplane construction or similar purposes where strength is important is to be discouraged until more is known about the action of the fungus on wood structure.

Lumber can be protected from attack of the yellow-stain fungus by seasoning the stock without delay after it is cut, storing it in a dry place, or treating it with preservatives.