

Exudation of Pitch

Pine and Douglas-fir can exude pitch (resin), and cedar species (except western redcedar) can exude oils. When exudation occurs before the wood has been painted, the exuded materials should be removed. If the exuded pitch has hardened, it can be removed fairly easily with a putty knife, paint scraper, or sandpaper; however, if it is still soft, such procedures smear the pitch over the surface of the wood. If the pitch is not removed, the paint is likely to alligator, crack, and fail over the pitch-coated areas soon after painting. Soft pitch should be removed thoroughly by scrubbing the surface with cloths wet with denatured alcohol. After most of the pitch has been scrubbed off, the surface should be sanded. Any further exudation that occurs before subsequent coats of paint are applied should be removed by scrubbing the surface with alcohol.

If exudation occurs after the wood is painted, the wood might best be left alone until it is time to repaint. The wood should then be scraped thoroughly before new paint is applied. If a few boards in the structure are particularly unsightly because of exudation or because of early paint failure, it may be wise to replace them with new lumber before repainting.

Exudation of pitch is favored by fluctuations in temperature or by high temperatures. In extreme cases, boards have been known to continue to exude pitch for many years. Repainting should be deferred until all exudation has ceased or until repainting has become necessary for other reasons. No paints and painting procedures can be relied upon to completely prevent exudation of pitch.

Brown Stain Over Knots

The knots in many softwoods species, particularly pine, contain an abundance of resin. The resin can sometimes cause paint to peel or turn brown. In most cases, the resin is "set" or hardened by the high temperatures used in kiln drying of construction lumber.

Good painting practices should eliminate or control brown stain over knots. First apply a good primer to the bare wood and then apply two topcoats. For exterior wood, do not apply ordinary shellac or varnish to the knot area initially because this may result in early paint failure. Specialty primer paints are available to seal knots for outdoor painting. These primer paints work best under high-quality acrylic latex topcoat paints.