How much do you really know about wood?

Professional development is key across the building products industry, from retail dealers, to builders, contractors, and architects. Some professions require a certain amount of hours of training to maintain a professional designation, while for others, continued learning is encouraged, if not tracked.

"Since wood has been one of the most popular building materials since Jamestown more than 400 years ago, it’s not often an area where professionals think they need to learn more," notes Jeff Easterling, president of the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association. "But the truth is just the opposite: as tastes and styles change, rotating in and out of favor, the ways in which real wood like eastern white pine can be used continues to grow. Whether you’re a retailer, dealer, engineer, or on the building side of things, there’s always something new to learn about how wood can be used."

To fill this learning void NELMA teamed up with AEC Daily, a leading provider of continuing education for professionals, to create the association’s first online course titled “Eastern White Pine: Sustainable Versatility” (course code AEC904).

“We were excited to show the building and design community the complete story of eastern white pine, from its rich New England history to today’s almost unlimited use in home design,” continued Easterling. “We knew the information needed to get out there and an online continuing education credit program was the answer. The results have been more than we ever expected, with professionals from across the board logging in: we’ve had entire architect staffs from some firms, and we just recently had an interior designer for a very popular fast food company not only take the course, but say she’d like to use it in future projects. This kind of reaction bodes very well for the wood industry!”

Located within Section 06 – Wood, Plastics, and Composites, the class is certified by 21 professional organizations, including the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the US Green Building Coalition (USGBC). Professionals who take the class learn about how through sustainable management, the forests of New England have had a remarkable comeback since the 1830s with eastern white pine being the most represented softwood in these forests. This light, yet strong, wood species has been used for generations and today meets the requirements of a renewable and sustainable building material.

The course reviews the contribution to sustainability of eastern white pine, its grading rules, wood products, and its many applications.

Since the class was launched in June 2016, upwards of 512 professionals have downloaded and completed this no-fee, one-hour class. The occupations of learners are wide spread, from architects, contractors, and engineers, to interior designers and retailers. Following the class, professionals are asked to answer five evaluation questions; on all five, the “excellent” rating has received the vast majority of responses.

“Our members are thrilled with the results, and we love that this positive wood information has a strong foothold,” concluded Easterling. “The course is open to anyone that truly wants to learn about eastern white pine.”

Eastern White Pine: Sustainable Versatility

This Online Learning Seminar is suitable for professionals, Contractor, etc.

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Professionals now have a new source for continuing education with the introduction by the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association of its first online course.
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TRADITION | TECHNOLOGY | QUALITY
New NELMA video brings eastern white pine to life

The Eastern White Pine Swatch. Easily one of NELMA’s most popular and successful marketing tools, the swatch was designed to illustrate the various grades of eastern white pine available. Color photographs bring the wood to have and spark the imagination. Designed to mimic a paint sample swatch, the trim, compact design makes it easy to carry.

Jeff Easterling, president of NELMA, estimates the association has given out or shipped upwards of 6,000 swatches since the tool was originally created in 2008. “The Eastern White Pine Swatch is a trade show favorite,” he says. “It’s a handy size for carrying, and everyone who visits the booth is fascinated with it. The ease of use and color photography make it an extremely different and very impactful way to sell more eastern white pine.”

Bringing the Swatch to Life

“Our goal is to help our members sell more wood,” explains Easterling. “We are constantly asking our members for suggestions and ideas to help us continue to move forward as an association.”

Not too long ago, a NELMA member, inspired by the usefulness of the printed eastern white pine swatch, wondered if the piece could be brought to life via video. Easterling and his team ran with the idea, and the Eastern White Pine Swatch Video was born.

Titled A Video Guide to the 5 Grades of Eastern White Pine, the video is featured on NELMA’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/nelmavt. It showcases the important variation of characteristics permitted within each of the five grades of eastern white pine and is available in four languages (English, Spanish, French and Chinese).

For each grade, the viewer will see a layer of six boards roll down the screen, then pause as call-outs are displayed that explain specific wood characteristics important to that particular grade. A total of eight layers are shown for each grade for a total of 48 boards, creating a video representation of what customers could expect within their specific grade purchase.

Originally developed to assist NELMA members with selling to their export markets, Easterling expects expanded usage for the videos within the wholesaler and retailer communities.

“This video is a fantastic way to illustrate what your order would look like if you purchased a load of eastern white pine,” Easterling says. “It brings the wood to life like never before! For anyone who watches the videos—wholesalers, retailers, builders—it’s the perfect tool because it presents a real-time visualization of the variations within a grade.”
Rough Night, Jan 3rd 2018

Still Here.
Still Pine Passionate.
The sweet smell of wood marketing

For years, alternative products have tried to replicate the look and feel of wood grain. But there’s one element of natural, renewable wood that stands alone, untouchable: the smell of real wood.

The smell of wood is classic and timeless. One of the most recognizable scents out there, it brings to mind the beauty of nature and remembered good times: perhaps it’s a pleasant hike along a beautiful mountain trail, the memories of a family cabin in the woods near a Maine lake, or the happiness and contentedness evoked when the Christmas tree is brought home each year.

An article published on Health.com entitled “The Healing Power of Pine” discusses this phenomenon and validates it with stories dating back hundreds of centuries:

- According to legend, a French explorer’s ship became stuck in the ice near Quebec about 500 years ago. Facing certain death from scurvy, his crew was rescued by a local tribal chieftain and a cup of freshly brewed pine tea.

NELMA introduced scented marketing to the lumber industry with its scratch-and-sniff postcard included with last September’s BPD.

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• Skipping ahead to the 1940s, a French researcher discovered huge amounts of vitamin C packed into pine bark and needles.
• A therapeutic walk in the woods is known as shinrin-yoku in Japan, with the practice being recognized for its ability to ease stress.
• Pine essential oil added to steamy water relieves colds and opens sinuses.

According to Psychologytoday.com, olfaction is the most mysterious of our senses. As we all know, smells can bring back memories and trigger good feelings.

“Human reaction to the smell of pine is universal,” said Jeff Easterling, president of the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association. “People smile. They sniff the wood again. They touch the wood and perhaps share a story. The biophilic reaction we have to wood is documented and it cannot be duplicated.”

The beauty and renewability of a species like eastern white pine cannot be denied. More trees are planted than are harvested each year, and our nation’s forests are in better shape than they were a century ago, according to the report “State of America’s Forests” published by the Society of American Foresters.

Over the last year, NELMA has created and launched two separate wood marketing tools focused on the smell of real pine. The first was a scratch-and-sniff postcard promoting “Knotty by NELMA,” a fictional, humorous take on magazine cologne ads. A clever way to promote NELMA’s new Retailer Marketing News e-newsletter, the marketing piece broke new ground for the wood industry.

Next up: a fresh new take on car scent. Packaged with most copies of this issue of BPD, the hanging car freshener invites you to “Smell the Difference Eastern White Pine Makes!” The creative design shares ideas for way eastern white pine can be used for modern spaces, to include wainscoting and shiplap, interior walls and exterior siding, and ceilings and floors. We hope you use the freshener it in your car or truck and it reminds you of real, authentic eastern white pine.

Let NELMA help you sell more New England and Great Lakes softwoods! Join the free Retail Outreach Program from NELMA and sign up to receive the free Retailer Marketing News e-newsletter.

Offering news and tools suitable for augmenting existing communications needs as well as driving leads, sales, and revenue, each issue features industry trends, marketing strategies, design tips, and sales tools.

Enroll today free at www.nelma.org/rop
More "Skip & Wane"

NELMA continues its lumber industry-first comic strip, "The Adventures of Skip & Wane," with the release of strip No. 7. Working at a softwood lumber mill in the Northeast, Wane (experienced and wise) and Skip (the newbie employee) confront an array of happenings in their day-to-day interaction among themselves and other notables.

The use of comics is well documented throughout the history of advertising and marketing as a positive format to present product information to a targeted audience. In NELMA's case, it's the lumber retailers and wholesalers that may find this comic series humorous as the lumber industry pokes fun at itself and competing materials.

Please visit www.nelma.org/the-adventures-of-skip-wane to view the entire series online.
DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE THE GRADE?

Introducing The Grader Academy by NELMA, a FREE interactive on-line grader training program. Built by the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturer’s Association as a grader training tool for Eastern White Pine and Spruce-Pine-Fir species, The Grader Academy is now available to the entire industry.

* Learn about lumber grading standards
* Test your grade rule knowledge
* Play Above-Board, the real-time Grader Game
* Compete with your friends and colleagues

Visit www.graderacademy.org to test your knowledge and skills at the lumber grading profession.