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## In This Issue

Q&A: Wood Chips in the Garden?  
Tips for Remodeling Success  
Industry News  
Can Timber Industry Survive?  
Small Town Sets Limits  
Spring into Savings Specials

## Quick Ship

### Get It There Faster

Bear Creek ships all over the country, offering jobsite direct delivery. We have found, however, that there are often delays in common carrier shipments because the material we ship arrives at a terminal, and can sit there for a week or two weeks before being shipped on to its destination. To get your material faster, consider a will-call at the regional terminal, which is usually within 50 miles of your site. We would be happy to quote you this service level as opposed to a job site delivery.

**Another tip to speed your order:** use bankwire services. This can get your order built and shipped immediately at less than the expense as an overnight letter.



As seen in these pictures from Hawaii, Port Orford cedar makes an excellent siding, decking and interior paneling, especially in humid climates where insects and moisture may cause other woods to fail.

Our thanks to the Kilroy family in Kauai, Hawaii for sharing these marvelous pictures of their home, built with Bear Creek Lumber Port Orford select knotty tongue and groove.

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## Product Highlight: Port Orford Cedar



photos by Tom and Carol Kilroy

Port-Orford-cedar is one of the white-cedars in a group of “false-cypresses,” numbering three native species in the U.S. and four additional species in Japan and Taiwan.

The Port-Orford-cedar (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) was first discovered in its small natural range along the California/Oregon coast in 1851. The total range was only about 200 miles long north and south, and about 50 miles deep, shared by both states, about 70 percent in Oregon.

Port-Orford-cedar, also known as Port-Orford white-cedar, Oregon-cedar and Lawson cypress prefers a mild climate with plenty of rain (40-90 inches annually)! High humidity and misting from the Pacific Ocean are also factors in the healthy growth of this tree in its natural areas. The range has been extended by planting the original and its variations around much of the northern half of the world, and in New Zealand.

These large attractive, and very shade-tolerant trees grow to 125' to 180' in 500 years, with diameters of 3 1/2' – 6'. A record tree, 219' tall with a diameter of 12', standing in Siskiyou, Oregon may be 700 years old.

The wood of Port-Orford-cedar has a straight, but somewhat uneven, medium grain. The wood is white yellow in color,

Continued on inside.

Please turn to Page two



**Port Orford Cedar /continued from front page** sometimes with tinges of light brown, and has a sweet ginger-like scent. Sapwood is hardly distinguishable from heartwood. Of relatively light weight and good strength, this wood has a specific gravity of 0.40 and weighs about 27 pounds per cubic foot at 8% moisture content, about the same as eastern hemlock and a little heavier than eastern white pine.

The wood dries easily and quickly with no problems. It works well in every respect with power or hand-tools, polishes and takes paint, stain and all finishes extremely well. Its ease in staining makes it simple to imitate mahogany and other higher priced woods, adding to its popularity as a fine cabinet wood. Port-Orford-cedar is very stable in any application and when exposed to soil, water or weather is considered to be one of the most durable of woods.

The unique, strong ginger-like scent, due to a volatile oil, can be overpowering. Dust masks and skin protection are recommended to avoid ingestion or contact with the oil or sawdust.

Port-Orford-cedar has been used for a wide variety of things from the Hawaiian Presidential Palace to Japanese Buddhist temples, California gold mine timbers, and building construction. It was used for high quality boats – Sir Thomas Lipton used this wood for his *Shamrock* series of 100' racing sailboats, built as challengers for the Americas Cup just prior to World War I.

This wood is in great demand in China and Japan for coffins and for temple construction because of its close relationship to Hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*) which is thought to have a spiritual nature.

This wood is also used for broom handles, boats, wet cell battery dividers, clothes chests and closets, aircraft plywood, veneer and stringed instrument sound-boards. It is also an excellent wood for arrow shafts. As seen in these pictures from Hawaii, it makes an excellent siding, decking, and interior paneling, especially in humid climates where insects and moisture may cause other woods to fail.

Bear Creek Lumber can supply a variety of products in Port Orford cedar, from tongue and groove boards and decking to timbers, beams and fascia.



## Q&A

**Q: I have used cedar chips as mulch for pathways and as a cushion under play equipment. I found cedar chips to be an effective and long-lasting weed block. Now I want to use it between trees and plants to keep the weeds down. I can buy cedar chips for a lot less than I pay for bark mulch. Will the cedar harm my plants?**

**A:** Yes. Cedar wood chips make such an effective weed block because the cedar repels water and suffocates plant life below. The oils in the cedar also prevent seeds that land on top of the mulch from sprouting. Using cedar to mulch your plants will dry out the roots. Save your cedar chips for woodland paths and under playground equipment. Cedar chips and shavings also make a great flea-repelling carpet for kennels.

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### Three Tips For Successful Remodeling

Low interest rates, rising home values and strong home sales are definitely contributing to the remodeling fervor among home owners, according to Mike Weiss, chairman of the NAHB Remodelers' Council.

The Northeast was the strongest region for professional remodeling in the third quarter, posting the highest index readings for both current market conditions and future expectations.

While the Midwest, South and West all posted a slight decline from the previous quarter, all four regions registered gains from their year-ago standings.

Consumers who are looking to remodel their homes are advised to keep the following tips in mind:

**Prioritize** The most successful remodeling projects begin with homeowners who have a definitive, yet realistic, idea of what they want done. It's never too early to start thinking about each and every detail, including such things as windows, wood, kitchen cabinets, fixtures and appliances. Delaying decisions about these items is an easy way to break a budget and hold up the remodeling process.

**Learn the lingo** Homeowners usually need a crash course in construction, beginning with the terminology. They should be somewhat familiar with common terms, such as "change orders" or "cost-plus estimates".

**Get away from it all** The process of remodeling can be all-consuming. To avoid eating, sleeping and breathing in the midst of major reconstruction, many of the owners move out for the better part of a year. At the very least, they should create a "safe room" free of any trace of construction.

# Industry News

**More records were broken in 2003:** 1.085 million new homes were sold, a new record, compared with 973,000 in 2002.

"The overall level of home sales is still healthy, but it's likely not going to be able to continue to grow in 2004 the way it grew in 2003," said Kevin Logan, chief economist at Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein. "It may be topping out, and sales will move sideways -- but that's not a bad thing, given the high level of sales."

**The median sales price for a new home** slipped to \$197,600 from a record \$204,300 in November.



## Can the Timber Industry Survive?

The outlook for Northwestern mills, both American and Canadian, has always been a mixed bag. Mills have been shutting down in this region for twenty years due to price and timber availability factors. In the past, most mills shut down because they were older, inefficient operations who were not geared toward the type of timber available to them. Traditionally, mills cut only large diameter trees; they retooled in the 90's to cut mostly smaller diameter trees.

What is of concern in 2004 is that the mills shutting down now are the ones that were supposed to survive the transition. They have the computer driven saws that can utilize the types of logs that come off private land or timber thinning sales. The current problem are law suits that seek delay. Uncertainty kills mills. Delay is the strongest tool to shut down any industry.

It's been noted in the press that most salvage timber sales in the Western states are no longer being bid on. These sales are for trees that burned in forest fires that are still usable, if harvested within two years of the burn that killed them. Too often, it is no longer possible to get a permit in two years because of environmental review and lawsuits. And the cost of meeting many of these environmental standards makes the wood too expensive to mill anyway. So the timber, whose sale receipts once went to the government's treasury, isn't sold, or is sold for so little that the income doesn't pay for the expense of studying the sales.

An aggravating factor is that worldwide timber prices are very low. There is a glut from plantations that produce the same type of low grade logs that might come from a salvage sale or a thinning project. The only good prices are for the older, larger trees. Logging older trees puts the mills right back to problems mentioned above.

The industry, to some extent, brought this fate upon themselves. They went from a sustained yield philosophy in the 60's and 70's to a 'cut it all for quarterly profits' mentality in the 80's. Clearcuts that covered whole mountainsides created a public backlash that triggered first the spotted owl, and then the salmon protections which are responsible for the delays. The industry, dismissive of wildlife concerns at first, now follows new timber cutting guidelines which make logging much more expensive. Large international holdings have held on to their basic markets, but smaller outfits live month-to-month. A mill fire, or a lawsuit is the literal straw that breaks their backs.

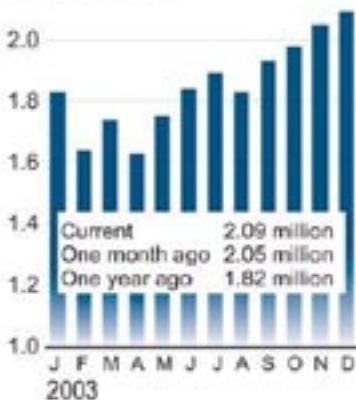
Even political intervention by the Bush administration seems to be too late for the small operators. The outlook is troubling for those in the construction industry, which depends on reliable good quality lumber products.

## Housing starts

Here is a look at the construction rate of new homes and apartments.

Seasonally adjusted

2.2 million units



## Small Isn't So Beautiful in Texas Town

*The piper must be paid, according to the city council in Arlington TX.*

Despite a sluggish national economy, and a slowdown in luxury-home sales that has many builders thinking small, one Texas municipality has passed an ordinance that will require local builders to think a little bigger. In November, the city of Arlington adopted a new housing standards ordinance that increases the minimum size of new single-family homes from 1,000 to 1,500 square feet of living space.

According to city council members, the new law is designed to attract large homes, which are expected to generate more tax dollars. Officials said that about 35% of the existing houses in the Fort Worth suburb have less than 1,500 square feet of living space, which some believe do not generate enough revenue to pay for their share of the police and other municipal services.

"I think we've raised the bar, and come in line with what other cities require," city council member Sheri Capehart told the Dallas Morning News. "What this will do is level the playing field."

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