

DO-IT-YOURSELF

Vary Your Choice Of Woods To Match Each Job's Needs

By J. RALPH DALZELL

The home craftsman must often decide what kind, grain, and grade of softwood to buy. The following suggestions will be helpful.

In general, Douglas fir, spruce and hemlock are good selections for framing and structural parts of houses because they have excellent rigidity. Southern pine is a good selection for large expanses of rough work to be covered with siding or flooring. Cedar is excellent for shingles. All soft pines and redwood are good for any finish work, as interior trim, millwork and moldings. Soft pines are easy to work and useful for cabinets and shelving.

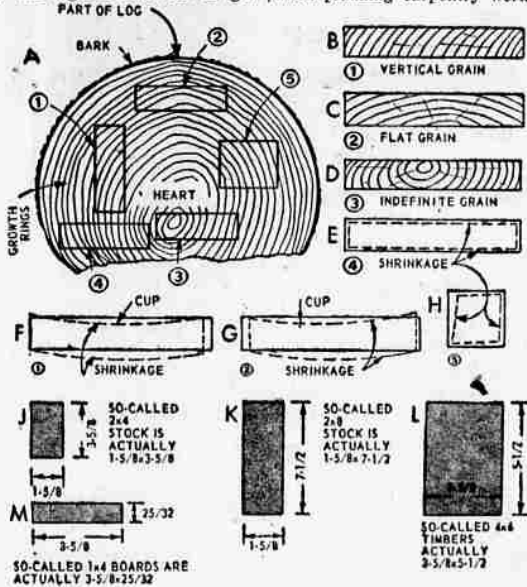
The grain in softwoods is caused by the growth rings shown in picture A. The rings produce patterns in lumber depending upon how the logs are sawed. In general,

"cup" a little and become less wide.

Picture G shows how flat grain lumber (2 at A and C) shrinks. The dotted lines indicate considerable "cupping" and that the width changes.

Picture E (see 4 at A) shows that wood cut from certain parts of a log shrinks a little in all directions without "cupping." The dotted lines in picture H (5 at A) indicate how a post may shrink. Heartwood (3 in picture A) is indefinite in its shrinkage.

We generally speak of 2x4, 4x6, 2x8, 1x4 and the like. The actual sizes of this lumber is shown at J, K, L and M. In like manner all other "dimension" lumber is somewhat smaller than the nominal sizes spoken of. The actual sizes (S4S—planed on four sides) should be carefully considered when planning carpentry work.



eral there are three types of grain as shown at B, C and D. See the same illustrations at 1, 2 and 3 at A. For most purposes, vertical grain is usually the most desirable, but also most expensive. If a pleasing pattern is desirable, as on walls, flat grain is best.

Shrinkage is often a serious problem with lumber. When trees are cut the resulting lumber contains a great amount of water. Unless most of the water is removed by natural drying or in kilns, the lumber should not be used because it will warp, shrink or twist. Even when boards are dried they are likely to shrink a little after they have been installed as flooring, shelves and cabinets.

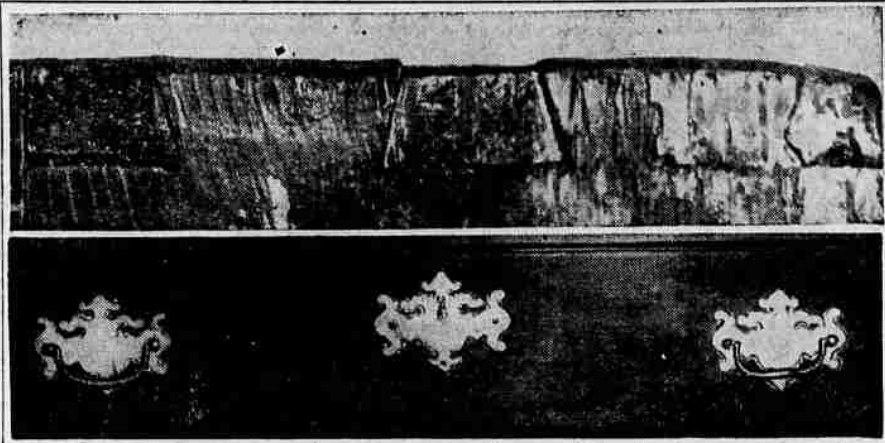
Picture F shows how vertical grain lumber (1 at A and B) shrinks. The dotted lines indicate that boards and other lumber

lumber is broadly divided into two main classes: select and common grades. The select grades, in order of decreasing quality are A, B, C and D. Most lumber yards combine A and B into one grade called B and Better (B & Btr). The common grades have blemishes which make them unsuitable for finish work, but satisfactory for rough work. Order B & Btr. for inside work. Some lumber yards offer, Cord Btr. as the best quality.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q.—How can I remove paint spots from the surface of concrete?

A.—A paint remover of the wash-off type should do the job. Apply a generous coat over the paint spots, and allow it to stand about 15 or 20 minutes. Then rinse with water. Several applications may be necessary.



ANTIQUES TIPOFF. In an 18th century piece illustrated by the drawer at top where the dovetails show considerable shrinkage. Old brasses have patina and show accumulated dust and polish as illustrated on the chest shown in the bottom picture.

Know Antiques Before Buying

If you are interested in antiques, and can afford to buy one, be sure you know what you are doing.

Florence Maine of Ridgefield, Connecticut, one of the exhibitors in the New York Antiques Fair (October 14-19) and an expert on Early American furniture advises:

"Seeing is believing and understanding. Try to compare the antique, and the old. You can pick up knowledge too, just by reading about the marks of an early antique."

She cautions that in choosing an antique, you should watch these points:

1. Is the object popular? If so, it is often reproduced, like lazy Susan tables and Hitchcock chairs.
2. Fresh paint. It is often applied to conceal new parts replacing originals.
3. Married pieces. The top of one antique table may be wedged to the bottom of another, or the top and bottom of different highboys joined together. The woods will not match, the dovetails in top drawers of a highboy will not match those in lower drawers, or leg outlines may be identified on the under side of a table.
4. Major restorations. These can reduce the value of a fine piece of furniture as much as 65 per cent. Minor restorations (old but not original brasses, perhaps) may also reduce the value of a piece.

Brasses are an indication of a piece because old ones give the appearance of having sunk right into the wood. They also have an accumulation of dust and polish that is difficult to remove and a mellow patina that can't be duplicated. New brasses, nuts or wood may often reveal plier marks if examined closely.

5. Wood takes on a darker color as it ages. Parts not exposed to air and light, such as the insides of case pieces and drawers, are always lighter in color than outside surfaces.

"her eye-catchers may be these:

1. Glue indicates a piece is relatively modern. Furniture makers of 100 years or more rarely used it.

"PINK EYES"

In albinos, the eyes are pink because of the lack of black pigment, causing the blood of the tiny vessels of the eye to show through the transparent parts of the eye. In normal eyes, the pink color is hidden by the color of the iris.

NOT BALD

The "bald" eagle has a fully feathered head. Its head feathers are white. In the days when this eagle was named "bald" was a synonym for "white."



THAT'S NO YOKE, SON. It's three of them, the work of an anonymous hen in Taipei, Formosa. A housewife in Taipei discovered the triple threat when she broke open a king-size egg for breakfast. Each one of the yolks is about half the size of the one found in a normal size egg.

2. Old pieces were not made of standard size boards. A chest side may have been constructed from a single board, unlike modern pieces.

3. Early cabinet makers avoided knotty boards, so too many knots is another indication of a later piece.

4. Eighteenth century pieces often reveal plane marks, whereas 19th century pieces are smoother, plane marks having been obliterated by sanding. Circular saw marks on the backboards of chests, desks, cupboards indicate the piece was made after 1840.

5. Dovetails are indicative of age. Earlier and cruder American pieces had large dovetails and one or two to a drawer, as against four or five to a drawer in later pieces.

6. Fancy table silver—salad fork, oyster forks and butter knives were not made before 1850.

As an antique collector becomes advanced in selecting original

pieces, she will learn to examine the piece closely to discover whether there are replacements—the legs of tables or chairs, clock finial, desk feet, and other likely parts that may have been broken.

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