Cypress update: Inside and out

Cypress is buzzing this year as homeowners and builders are looking now more than ever for an exceptional building material that offers natural durability, good looks, and versatility.

"Cypress is a unique wood species native to the Southern states," says Stephen Logue, Battle Lumber Co., Wadley, Ga. "It’s a beautiful wood that’s readily available in various sizes and aesthetic grades. And what’s been attracting more people to the species is its durability to withstand nature and the elements."

It all happens naturally. Cypress trees produce oil in their heartwood called cypressene. The oil acts as a preservative, making cypress products naturally resistant to decay, fungi and insects like termites and carpenter bees. Having this natural preservative makes cypress an ideal alternative to other wood species that need to be pressure treated with chemicals.

“Our cypress business has really increased this year, and not just in our..."
CYPRESS is having a revival in the marketplace, particularly in siding, among homeowners who prefer a classic, distinct look.

Brian Meier, Cypress Rose Sawmill, Homerville, Ga., also confirms cypress’ current revival in the marketplace, especially in siding. “Homeowners seem to prefer the classic, distinct look of cypress siding,” he says. “This year, the standard bevel and rabbeted bevel patterns have really been gaining popularity. We expect the interest in cypress to continue along with the stronger housing market.”

In Gatesville, N.C., Nancy Tuck of Gates Milling agrees: “In our area, we’ve seen a renewed interest in cypress bevel siding. But we’ve also noticed a growing trend towards tongue-and-groove siding with a nickel joint, as well as shiplap. The straight sightlines of these patterns, paired with the charm of cypress, offer the perfect blend of contemporary and rustic appearance.”

The species’ good looks and honey hues are right at home indoors, as well. “Cypress beadboard and planked ceilings are really popular right now,” Meier adds. “We’ve also been seeing cypress beams used as accents for vaulted ceilings.”

And while many homeowners lately are choosing to dress up their walls and ceilings with the clear look of Select grade cypress, or the knotty character of #2 grade, Shepard Haggerty, Williams Lumber Co. of North Carolina, Rocky Mount, N.C., says pecky cypress is becoming his company’s hottest product. “People are drawn to pecky cypress because its naturally occurring pockets and holes offer intriguing character,” Haggerty says. “Pecky cypress is being used for everything from paneling and coffered ceilings, to cabinetry and accent pieces.”

Geoff Philippus, custom cabinet maker in Mandeville, La., says he works with pecky cypress often. “We recently completed a massive kitchen island with matching built-ins, showcasing pecky cypress. The visual effect is like nothing else out there. It’s one of my favorite projects.”

Natural durability! Good looks! Versatility! Cypress has it all. And it’s making its mark indoors and out.

For more information on building with cypress, visit www.cypressinfo.org.

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