



Photo by Everett Marc Dennison

Southern cypress siding still the natural choice

WHEN IT COMES to siding materials, options abound. And if one thing is certain, it's that natural wood siding has stood the test of time and continues to remain a top choice for today's homeowners. As lumber dealers are finding out, one of the most popular wood species for siding applications is cypress.

Native to the Southeast U.S., cypress has long been a preferred siding material in the hot and humid

Atlantic and Gulf coastal regions. Recently, the wood has been gaining popularity across the country thanks to its reputation for providing dependable performance, dimensional stability, and undeniable good looks, according to Zack Rickman of Atlanta Hardwood Corp., Mableton, Ga.

"Cypress is a well-known, high-quality siding product and for good reasons," Rickman said. "It's a competitively priced alternative to cedar, and unlike pressure-treated wood, cypress is naturally durable thanks to oil produced in its heartwood, called cypressene. The oil acts as a preservative that protects the wood from decay and repels insects like termites and carpenter bees. And because it's real wood, cypress offers a beautiful, authentic look and feel that is not easily replicated by composite, vinyl or fiber cement products."

Depending on the desired aesthetic, cypress is readily available in common visual grades, including select grade for a mostly clear, defect-free appearance, and knotty #2 grade to offer a more rustic look. Cypress also is available in the most popular siding

patterns, such as horizontal bevel and clapboard, or vertical patterns like shiplap, tongue-and-groove, and board-and-batten.

Cypress offers a variety of finishing options as well. Homeowners who choose cypress for its honey-like hues, can preserve the color by applying a clear, water-repellent sealer. Over time, left untreated, the wood will weather to an attractive, light gray color. Cypress also takes stains well and works best with semi-transparent, oil-based stains. If more color is preferred, cypress can be coated with 100% resin acrylic/latex paints, paired with a compatible, high-quality primer.

"Regardless of the finished selected, cypress siding should be finished on all sides and edges to offer complete protection from moisture absorption," Rickman added. "When installed properly, finished correctly, and maintained regularly, cypress siding will last a lifetime or more." ⁵²⁶

– For more information on cypress siding, please visit the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association's website at CypressInfo.org.

Installation Tips

To assist savvy homeowners and pros install cypress siding, the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association recently published an updated resource, *Cypress Siding Installation Guidelines*.

Available online at CypressInfo.org, the free guide offers informative instructions and best practices—including what to know before getting started on a siding project, recommendations on finishing solutions, and how to install a variety of cypress siding patterns.