

Western Red Cedar: Select & Primary Grade

This is an imported North American product, known for its quality and durability. It should not be confused with the cheaper homegrown equivalent which is relatively low grade and less durable.

Timber Grade

Select & Primary grade Western Red Cedar is a blended grade that consists of predominantly number 2 grade mixed with 15-20% number 4 grade.

This means that the timber will naturally contain a mixture of clearer boards alongside boards with more visible knots, splits, wane and other natural characteristics. **It is not a clear, defect-free grade of timber.**

Select & Primary grade may include:

- Frequent and larger knots, including soft, dead or loose knots
- Face splits and checks
- Wane
- Resin pockets
- Sapwood
- Bruising and other minor physical damage
- Variation in colour and grain, and raised grain

The characteristics found within this grade are not considered defects. Some material may, however, require selection, cutting or removal during installation depending on the appearance required.

Select & Primary grade Western Red Cedar offers a significantly more cost-effective option than higher grades.

Timber Characteristics

Western Red Cedar is non-resinous, straight-grained, coarse-textured and exhibits a fairly prominent growth-ring figure. It is soft, brittle, aromatic – especially when wet – and light in weight.

The timber is stable after drying, with relatively little tendency to warp. Small splits and checks may occur during drying. Movement caused by shrinking and swelling in changing weather conditions is generally minimal.

The sapwood of Western Red Cedar is narrow and cream/white in colour. The heartwood often displays considerable variation in colour. Boards from the centre of the log may be a dark chocolate-brown, changing to salmon pink nearer the sapwood. The timber may also be variegated with alternating dark and light zones.

After drying and exposure to the elements, the red and pink tones are gradually lost and the timber weathers to a silver-grey colour. The eventual colour can vary depending on the environment, and this naturally weathered appearance is often deliberately sought after.

Defects, Selection and Waste

When calculating quantities of Western Red Cedar cladding, an allowance for site wastage should always be included.

The amount of material wastage will depend heavily on the appearance required and, in particular, whether shorter lengths and joints are acceptable in the finished installation.

If shorter lengths and joints are acceptable, wastage can be relatively low. For example, a 4.27m board with a knot or shake near one end may still provide more than 4m of usable timber once the affected section has been cut out.

Conversely, if every board must be a particular length and free of visible knots, shakes and other unwanted characteristics, that same 4.27m board might be rejected entirely because of the small area of knot or shake, despite more than 4m of otherwise usable timber remaining.

Customers requiring a completely clear appearance, with fixed board lengths and no visible joints should therefore expect substantially higher wastage than customers who are prepared to select, cut and join boards during installation.

How Western Red Cedar Cladding Is Sold

Western Red Cedar cladding is sourced as a mixed-length specification and blended grade. Our stock is sold on the same basis so that the specification and grade remain consistent.

A standard order of Western Red Cedar will therefore contain a mixture of available lengths and will naturally include variation in the appearance and characteristics of individual boards.

Lengths

Board lengths are typically 1.83m and longer as arising. We regularly have lengths available up to approximately 4.88m and occasionally up to 6.1m.

A normal order is calculated based on the required square metreage and will contain a mixture of available lengths to make up the required quantity.

Specific lengths may be available by arrangement, but this is subject to stock availability and may attract a surcharge.

Importantly, requesting a specific length does not mean that the boards will be free from knots, shakes or other natural characteristics associated with the Select & Primary blended grade.

If a completely clear appearance and specific board lengths are required, a higher grade or bespoke specification may be more appropriate. This will normally carry a significant additional cost and is subject to availability.

Bespoke Orders

We are able to offer bespoke profiles, lengths and grades, subject to availability. Contact us with your required specification.

Bespoke orders should be accurately calculated, as small subsidiary orders may be subject to machine-setting and carriage charges.

We are unable to accept returns of bespoke products.