

## Resin Bleed

As hot weather approaches, we begin receiving calls about resin bleeding out of logs, and what can be done to stop it. Other names given to this material include rosin, sap, and pitch, but they are referring to the same material. Amber is fossilized tree resin. Short of replacing the log or logs that are bleeding, there is very little anyone can do to stop it from occurring. Resin is made up of a combination of rosin acids, fatty acids and hydrocarbons. It is produced by most trees but particularly soft wood species such as spruce, pine and fir. There is no way to foresee if a log will bleed resin. Trees may form pockets of resin due to a past injury or for a variety of other reasons. When the tree is harvested, it may take months or even years for the resulting log to bleed resin.

Tree resin is typically thick and viscous but during the summer months the logs can get hot enough for the resin contained in the wood to soften and bleed out of the wood. Once this begins it is virtually impossible to halt the flow of the resin out of the wood. It will easily burst through coatings like paint or stain and form an ugly sticky mass on top of the finish. One problem with resin bleed is that the log may continue to bleed each summer for years. Most of the time it is just a few logs, but occasionally we encounter a log home where numerous logs or knots on a south or west facing wall bleeds resin. When that occurs, it can be unsightly.

Is there anything that can be done about resin bleed? Since the resin is soft and sticky it is difficult to wipe off the surface without making an even bigger mess. It is not water soluble, so it cannot be washed off. Small spots of resin can sometimes be cleaned off with alcohol or other organic solvents (i.e. xylene or toluene), but if there is a finish present the alcohol or organic solvents can also degrade the existing finish. If an organic solvent is used, it is important to remove all of the residual solvent. One effective method of removing resin is to chip it off when the resin becomes brittle during the winter months. In areas where cold days are scarce, you can use an ice pack in an attempt to freeze the resin and then chip it off. There is no guarantee this method will work, but it could be worth the effort. Once the temperature increases, during summer, the bleeding will most likely return.

When resin bleed occurs on bare wood and since there is no effective way to totally remove the resin, the application of a finish covers the resin. When the wall heats up and the resin starts to flow, it carries the finish with it leaving unsightly spots of exposed bare wood. There is not much that can be done to end this process until the resin stops bleeding.



**Examples of Resin Bleed**