

Technical Tip Flavonoids

Flavonoids are colorful compounds that are present in most plants. They are what make red beets red and blueberries blue. They are also responsible for giving flowers their broad range of colors. Trees too contain flavonoids with some species containing more than others. In some types of wood these flavonoids are apparent right from the start. The wood may be yellow, red or other colors depending on the species. But in several species of wood these colored flavonoids may not become visible unless the wood is exposed to some type of acid. The most common problem flavonoid color we've encountered is light pink to red, typically in Douglas Fir but occasionally in other wood species as well. On exterior walls bright sunlight usually fades the color within a couple of weeks. Consequently, for interior situations the color can be essentially permanent and since it is not just on the surface it may be impossible to remove by sanding, bleach or cleaning agents.

It is impossible to predict if wood is susceptible to flavonoid staining by just looking at it. We always recommend that for interior applications in particular, a few small out of sight areas be tested beforehand with the product or products you plan to use to see what effect they have on the wood. Several of our products contain acids in one form or another, so it is always best to give them a test before treating an entire wall. These products include Log Wash, OXcon and our borate preservatives, Shell-Guard Concentrate, Shell-Guard RTU and Armor-Guard. The incidence of flavonoid staining is quite low, we typically get only three or four calls a year about it, but it is always good to know what's going on if it happens to you.



Pink Flavonoids on Douglas Fir