

Beetle Kill Pine

Beetle kill/blue stain pine is a very misunderstood product. There are three *major misconceptions* about blue stain/beetle kill pine:

- It all comes from very close to Denver (or Colorado).
- Every board is very blue.
- Every board will be totally useable in its entirety.

READ BELOW FOR CLARIFICATION ON THESE.

We've detailed some of the blue stain/beetle kill information below:

- Blue stain and beetle kill are the same item. A bacteria carried by the pine beetle “infects” and eventually kills the tree, a side effect of this bacteria is the “blue” discoloration in varying amounts in the wood. As pictured on our website, a typical log that produces beetle kill boards is only “blue-colored” in the outmost 2” or so of the tree. The beetles/bacteria affect only the sapwood portion of the tree.
- Some suppliers are now providing a “fake” blue stain board. These boards are laminated with a coating, stained with a colorant or other means to mimic a beetle kill look. These are not the real “beetle kill/blue stain” wood. Real boards have been produced in the forest using the natural process as described above.
- While 1x6 T&G boards used for paneling and siding are the most common item available in blue stain pine, many other sizes are readily available, including boards in 1x4 through 1x12 widths in 8’ through 16’ lengths and 2x4 through 2x12 widths, again in 8’ through 16’ lengths.
- The blue staining of the wood does NOT reduce the strength or integrity of the wood itself.
- All blue stain wood is graded as #3 grade. The grading rules for #2 (or better grade) boards do not allow for any blue stain to be showing, which means that all blue stain is assessed as #3. However, looking at the boards, the majority of the goods you’ll receive are far better than the “average” #3 board, which is generally a low grade meant for palleting, crating, very rough construction or bracing. However, there WILL be lower quality boards in the mix, please plan to have some “waste” as you may be unable to use a small portion of the wood you purchase due to large knots, wane, or other undesirable aspects in any given board. Based on its low cost, you can still have a very economical product. Some percentage of the boards will have undesirable defects. On a milled product such as 1x6 T&G paneling, the percentage will fall off further since machining will take off some of the defects.
- Be aware of the wide variation in the boards in both “blueness” and overall quality/appearance. The exact “shade” of blue will vary widely also.
- **It is important to note the amount of “blueness” varies wildly from board to board. As stated earlier, ANY amount of blue in the board necessitates a #3 grade.** Note #3 grade can allow large knots, open knotholes, pitch pockets, wane and other defects.
- This is a true pine board. Most pine (i.e., non-blue stain) is labelled as pine but is truly a mix of pine and spruce species. Spruce as a whole is a less desirable wood as the knot structure lends itself to a less attractive wood surface.
- This material can readily be machined into log siding, 2x decking products, any siding pattern desired and moldings. Many users are interested in doors, trim and flooring – all possible in this type of wood.
- Beetle kill is often talked about as a “green” product, especially as many believe it is locally sourced, thereby reducing carbon footprints and the like. However, this is an incorrect assumption despite significant stands of beetle kill lumber in Colorado (even in the immediate I-70 mountain corridor). Virtually all of this product being sold in our area comes from Canada, the Dakotas, Montana and Idaho. One of the largest reasons for this sourcing is that there is no large commercial lumber mill operating within Colorado.
- Many customers desire 1x6 tongue and groove boards to be used for flooring; for this application you’ll need to use *square edge* tongue and groove boards. This installation will leave no gaps between boards if installed properly resulting in a solid floor surface. One note of caution: pine is a softwood, unlike oak, maple, cherry, etc.; therefore it may not perform as well in a flooring application.
- Blue stain veneers are now available for plywoods. We stock 4x8 sheets in a ¼”, ½” and ¾” thickness. These are “good” both sides and generally come with an MDF core. However, the blue colored veneer may be only on one side.
- Lumber mills as a rule aren’t directly “making” beetle kill pine. Instead, this product is a result of milling logs

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into boards. The boards having any element of blue are segregated into this category. This is not and cannot be any guarantee of the blueness or overall quality of the board(s).

- In general, in our opinion the 1x6 size – whether in plain boards or in a pattern (like T&G) will be the best “overall boards”. This size usually has the best compromise in overall quality (knots, open knotholes, wane, pitch pockets, cracking, etc.) and amount of blueness. Wider/larger sizes become increasingly difficult to avoid imperfections in the wood and they progressively contain less blue.
- Especially since this is an aesthetically desirable product, attention should be taken to order extra and expect some unusable boards. Just like purchasing produce at the grocery store, all parts of the apple or head of lettuce aren’t all useable. Indeed, if you buy the pre-cleaned, pre-trimmed packages of lettuce, you’ll pay significantly more than a lettuce just picked off the field! Beetle kill pine is a very affordable product – as a comparison, as of this writing,
 - #2 T&G “regular” pine in 8’ pieces is approximately 20% more than blue stain
 - Knotty cedar in the same pattern is more than twice as much
 - Clear cedar or pine would more than 5 or 6 times as much in price.

Blue Stain Size Chart

BOARD Length:	8’	10’	12’	14’	16’
1x4	x				
1x6	x	x	x	x	x
1x8	x	x	x	x	x
1x12	x				x
1x6 T&G SQ.	x	x	x	x	x
1x6 T&G V	x	x	x	x	x

*Note we stock both V groove (paneling, siding, etc.) and square edge (generally flooring) in 1x6 tongue and groove.

PLYWOOD Thickness:	¼”	½”	¾”
4x8	x	x	x