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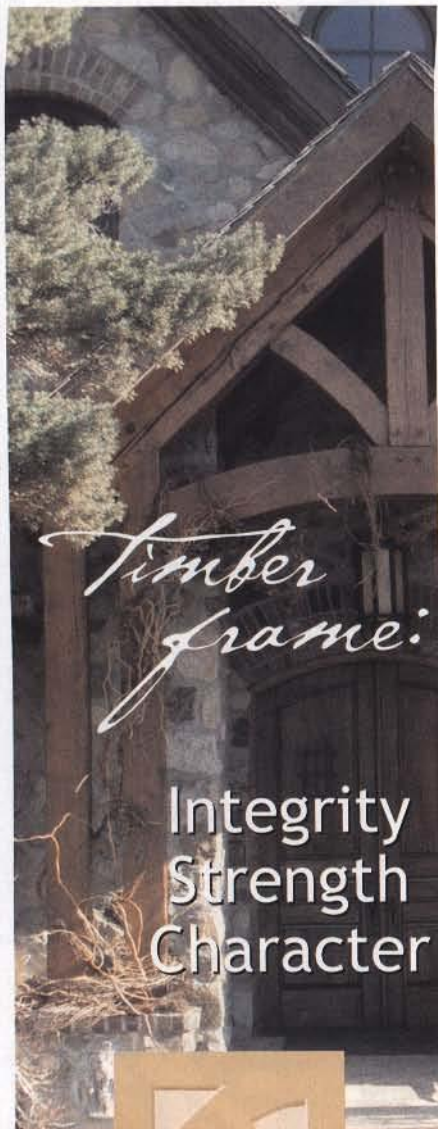
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Ask the Expert

>>> Bark Siding

Marty McCurry, Highland Craftsmen, Inc. founder, has the answers to your top questions about bark siding.

> **Source** Bark siding is made from the inner and outer bark harvested from freshly cut trees during the spring wood growth cycle. However, the trees are not sacrificed specifically for their bark; we harvest bark from trees that are already being cut. Normally, the bark is ripped from the cylinder of these trees as loggers drag them out of the forest. At the sawmill, any remaining bark is ground off the log with a de-barker and is usually sold as mulch or discarded. We buy the raw bark from the timber-cutting industry before it is lost, so we are utilizing what would otherwise be a waste product.

> **Process** When the bark is harvested, it is cut to raw sizes, hand-worked with hatchets, chopped into squares, then cleaned and placed in stacks with sticks in between (called sticking the bark) which allow air to flow between the layers. Then the bark goes into a dry kiln where it is sterilized under high heat and dried to around 8 percent moisture, which is well below yard conditions.

> **Lifespan** Bark siding is proven to last at least 75 years, and requires little to no maintenance. Our bark siding is currently being tested for flame spread and the early indication is that it is no more flammable than any other type of wood cladding. Insects and birds pose little threat because bark siding is just a dry epidermal layer; there is nothing beneath the bark that is of value to these creatures.

> **Cost** The price of bark siding falls into the category of a premium-grade wood siding. However, the cost benefit comes years later because bark siding does not require maintenance. All other types of wood cladding must be restained or repainted every few years, which becomes very costly.

>>> **About the Expert** Marty McCurry is the founder of Highland Craftsmen, Inc., a company that has specialized in the production, sales and installation of bark siding for the past 12 years. (828) 295-0796, highlandcraftsmen.com.