



FINDING A GREENER FUTURE

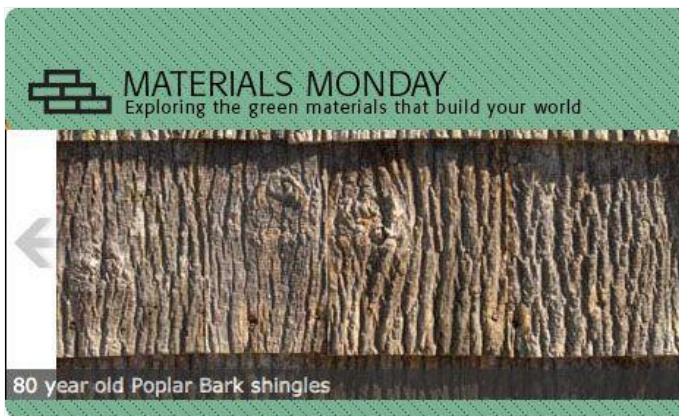
DESIGN TECHNOLOGY TRANSPORTATION SCIENCE BUSINESS LIVING ENERGY SLIDESHOWS SOCIAL

Bark Shingles: If it Works For Trees, Why Not Houses?



Lloyd Alter (@lloydalter)
Design / Green Architecture
February 1, 2010

Share on Facebook



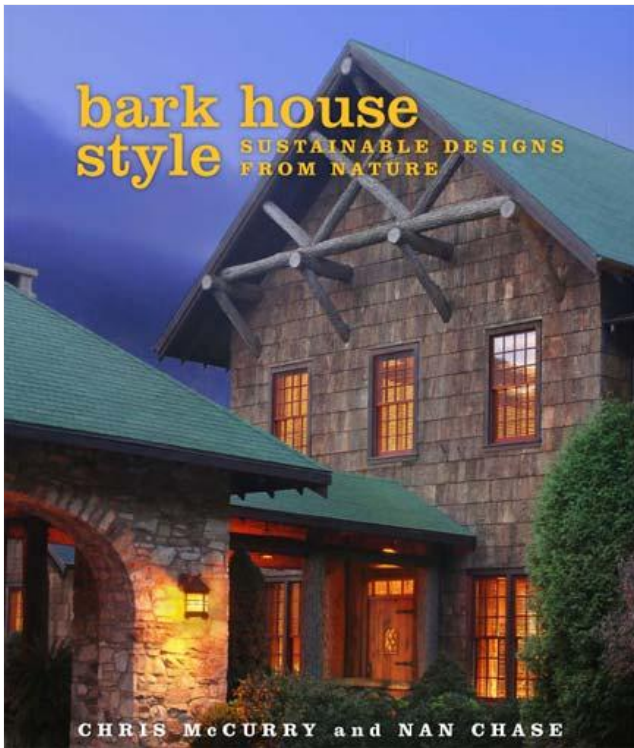
Humans only invented vinyl siding a few decades ago, but tree bark has been protecting trees for quite a while longer. Bark shingles were often used on Craftsman style houses in the early 1900s, but they were made from chestnut, which was almost wiped out in a blight. A century later, they still look good. Chris and Marty McCurry started looking at bark shingles in the early nineties and reinvented them, reintroducing them as a product in 1996.

GET 50+ LOGO CONCEPTS FOR UNDER \$300!
100% Money Back Guarantee.

99 designs LEARN MORE >

MOST POPULAR RIGHT NOW

- Ingenious 280 sq. ft. tiny house features brilliantly curved roof (Video)
- This Unity Homes prefab is revolutionary on so many levels
- The FLIZ Pedal-Less Bike Concept
- Macro photos of snowflakes show impossibly perfect designs
- Why I insist on sleep-training my children



They even wrote a book about it, calling bark "Rustic, refined, natural, organic, unique, sophisticated, timeless, long lasting, and sustainable" via [Highland Craftsmen](#)

It wasn't easy; they had to figure out how to make it out of poplar instead of chestnut. How to dry them and install them. They then went after just about every green certification that means anything, including [Cradle to Cradle](#) (what could be better than bark for that?) CA Section 01350 for VOCs and [FSC chain of custody](#).

Their sourcing is sustainable as well, since the trees are being cut for the furniture industry and the bark is usually just left to rot or is burned.



Photos via [Highland Craftsmen](#)

It is also completely maintenance free, without any treatment or finish at all. Vinyl lasts maybe 20 years; cedar needs staining every 10 years or so, but bark shingles installed on buildings in 1895 are still going strong.

WHAT'S HOT ON FACEBOOK



10 of the world's most remarkable trees

From oldest to tallest to most sacred and more, in celebration of Arbor ...

by [Melissa Breyer](#) in Natural Sciences

Woody Guthrie's 1942 New Years Resolutions Resonate Today

The great folksinger had 33 resolutions for the year; no record of how ...



by [Lloyd Alter](#) in Culture



Kids can now get themselves to school - and parents won't get arrested

The first-ever federal 'free range parenting' legislation was signed earlier this month, freeing ...

by [Katherine Martinko](#) in Family

Posters from the past still inspire today

A huge trove of posters from the WPA is full of messages that ...



by [Lloyd Alter](#) in Culture

NEW TO TREEHUGGER?



10 reasons to go green starting NOW

Have you been looking for a reason to go green? Look no further ...

by [Team Treehugger](#) in HTGG

Sign Up for TreeHugger's Newsletters!

Our email newsletters will help you keep up with all things green!



More information at [Bark House](#), the [Christian Science Monitor](#) and [Jetson Green](#).

More [Materials Monday](#)

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE+

PINTEREST

You might like:



Don't Buy Any of These 15 Cars
[Forbes](#)



Hefty 224 sq. ft. little house doesn't feel tiny at all
[The Verge](#)



Shipping Container Prefab
[The Verge](#)



Japanese students design home heated by solar
[The Verge](#)



New electric wheel kit converts any bike into an e-bike
[The Verge](#)



DIY Trombe Wall Made From River Stones
[The Verge](#)



Silent rooftop wind turbines could power homes
[The Verge](#)



People amazed at the real reason behind solar
[The Verge](#)

Recommended by

How much money can a solar roof save you in North Carolina?



Profit from your roof space: find local deals on solar in your area, eliminate your power bill, and join the solar revolution.

[Calculate My Savings!](#)

TAKE ACTION NOW!



Give Everyone the Chance to Thrive by Becoming a Global Citizen

author: Global Citizen

signatures: 10,641

[sign petition](#)

Powered by Care2's Take Action Platform™

by [Lloyd Alter](#) in Sustainable Product Design



A Glimpse of What We've Lost: 10 Extinct Animals in Photos

We're in the midst of the sixth great extinction right now, with the ...

by [Mat McDermott](#) in Natural Sciences



5 Comments **TreeHugger.com**

 Login ▾

 Recommend  Share

Sort by Newest ▾



Join the discussion...

chrismccurry · 6 years ago

jon

Great observations. The book mentioned discusses the longevity of various bark materials as well as historic applications. One thing we challenged ourselves with before manufacturing the poplar bark shingles was to find examples of historic structures that had been clad with the material. Poplar bark has a proven record of 80+ years of longevity in a 4 season climate. We have shipped the material all over the country and monitor it in other climates as well.

Yellow poplar which is the common name for the specie we make the shingles from is slow to burn and not used as a primary source for heating kilns. It is occasionally used as a mix however. In the region where the shingles grow, mills usually mulched the material and had trouble selling it for landscaping because of the light color. At the end of the products life, we do recommend pulling the nails and mulching it... returning it to the earth as a nutrient. Its part of our cradle to cradle process.

1 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

chrismccurry · 6 years ago

Bark House brand shingles have a class B fire rating, naturally. Wood shingles are class C and the slowest burn times are class A. That means the bark shingles burn slower than wood cladding. They are accepted by most municipal town building codes.

^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

jbcsmith101 · 6 years ago

this is very interesting and beautiful

1 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›



jon · 6 years ago

Chestnut was renowned for it's rot resistance, and a highly prized wood for construction and furniture. It is unhelpful to suggest that shingle made from the bark of other species would perform equally to Chestnut.

Essentially, Bark can replace wood shingles cut from other trees, typically cedars. I would be very interested in seeing how they compare on a variety of performance standards.

Bark is often stripped off in or near the forest where the logs were felled, helping to return

biomass to the soil. At a lumberyard, bark is typically burned for process heat to assist drying the lumber. Bark is not necessarily a 'wasted' resource.

Robin, Bark might be less prone to fire than wood shingles. Fire hazard and insurance coverage might well be stumbling blocks to using bark in a typical house.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Robin Mullet • 6 years ago

I think they are beautiful, but most insurance companies would have a real problem with the fire hazard I would think.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

[Subscribe](#)

[Add Disqus to your site](#) [Add Disqus](#) [Add](#)

[Privacy](#)

Search

Powered by

All ▾ Search Amazon

Go

