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WWW.BARKHOUSE.COM

534 OAK AVENUE
SPRUCE PINE, NC 28777

PH. 828-765-9010
FAX 828-765-9012

Bark House® Shingle Siding Insect and Woodpecker Resistance

One of the first questions we often receive in initial inquiries about the Bark House® Shingle product is whether there will ever be an issue with insects. The short answer is no. Field observations of early poplar bark installations from the 1920's initially proved to us that insect damage was nonexistent. We regularly check in on our previous projects that date back to 1990 and note the same result.

Another question that is less frequently asked about the Bark House® Shingles is if there are issues with woodpeckers. The long answer to both issues is two-pronged. First, there is no nutritional value on the bark for bugs or woodpeckers. Plus, there are trace amounts of Alpha Pinene within the bark of tulip poplar. The compound is noticeable when the bark is harvested exhibiting a somewhat pungent turpentine scent. Early in our product development, we had our bark shingles tested for a host of properties including a detailed chemical analysis. Even though Alpha Pinene is considered a VOC, the amounts present in tulip poplar bark do not exceed levels considered hazardous to humans. This is reflective in the fact that our Bark House Exterior Shingles passed the California Classroom VOC Emission Standard as well as receiving a Cradle to Cradle Platinum Certification. Inquiries with Forest Service Entomologists confirm that the Alpha Pinene content of the bark makes it highly toxic and resistant to insect damage. Insects are what woodpeckers crave. While insects may still be found on the surface, we have never found any evidence of insects boring through the bark or taking residence within the inner bark phloem. While the question occasionally arises of the use of borate treatment to enhance its resistance to insects, all of our research shows that it is an absolutely unnecessary procedure, and borate is water-soluble – meaning it does not last on exterior applications.

Woodpeckers may still want to check out the possibility of nesting. They can do this for any wood (or bark) product. They are pecking because the wall gives a hollow sound that they may want to bore for a nest. They will eventually give up, but there are a few steps you can take to hasten this.

1. Don't put up birdfeeders near your house.
2. Attach a shiny object to the eave of the house to scare them away or attach an owl decoy.