Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 1: The veneer production process starts with the purchase of veneer-quality hardwood trees that including White Oak, Cherry, Walnut, Hickory, Maple and Red Oak hardwood species. It is important to select the right veneer-quality log in order to produce high-grade veneer.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 2: As the logs arrive at the mill, they will be inspected and reconciled against the purchase.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 3: Logs then go through a "debarker" to remove the bark from the tree. The bark waste is sold to mulching companies and used to produce hardwood mulch.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 4: The logs then move into the sawmill where the real artwork begins. The first cut of the log decides the look and appearance of the veneer. The parts of the log produced are referred to as "flitches."

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 5: In order to make the wood pliable for the slicing process the flitches are soaked in a vat of hot water. There is no official recipe on how to cook (soak) the logs. Therefore every company has their own secret recipe.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 6: The flitches are removed from the vats and cleaned. To clean the flitches an employee hand planes each one to remove debris like sand or dirt that will damage the veneer cutting knife during the slicing process.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 7: Flitches are then planed on one side by a large planer to create a flat surface that is important when mounting the flitch to the veneer slicer.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 8: Next the wood goes through the slicing process. Veneer knife setup and blade angles are crucial for producing high grade veneer. This process is very demanding as each log is cut into sheets of veneer that have an average thickness of 1/50th of an inch.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 9: The veneer is dried or cured. For this process, large steam-heated press dryers that have stainless steel belts are used to transport each sheet of veneer individually.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 10: As the sheets of veneer exit the press dryers they are combined into 24 or 32 sheet bundles.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 11: The bundles of veneer are clipped (trimmed) to make a rectangular shape and the bundles are strapped to keep the veneer together.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 12: The veneer is measured. Using the data from the log purchases and the measurements from the clipping process the company knows how many square feet it has for each log, giving the actual yield and therefore the cost. The unique situation in the veneer business is the customer pays for the market value of the veneer.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

How are veneers made?

Step 13: The final step in the veneer production process is sorting, grading and marketing the veneer.

Media Tip Sheet: "How does a tree become another wood product?"

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These are samples of White Oak veneer. Indiana Veneers offers this and all species of Indiana hardwoods.

Thanks to Indiana Veneers Corporation for describing their process.

Indiana Veneers is known for its long and outstanding world-wide reputation for high-quality hardwood veneer production. Their hardwood veneers are used all over the world and to date Indiana Veneers has exported to 42 countries.

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If you would like a copy of any of the photos in this PowerPoint, contact jkeating@ isda.in.gov and they will be emailed to you. Please include deadline information.

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