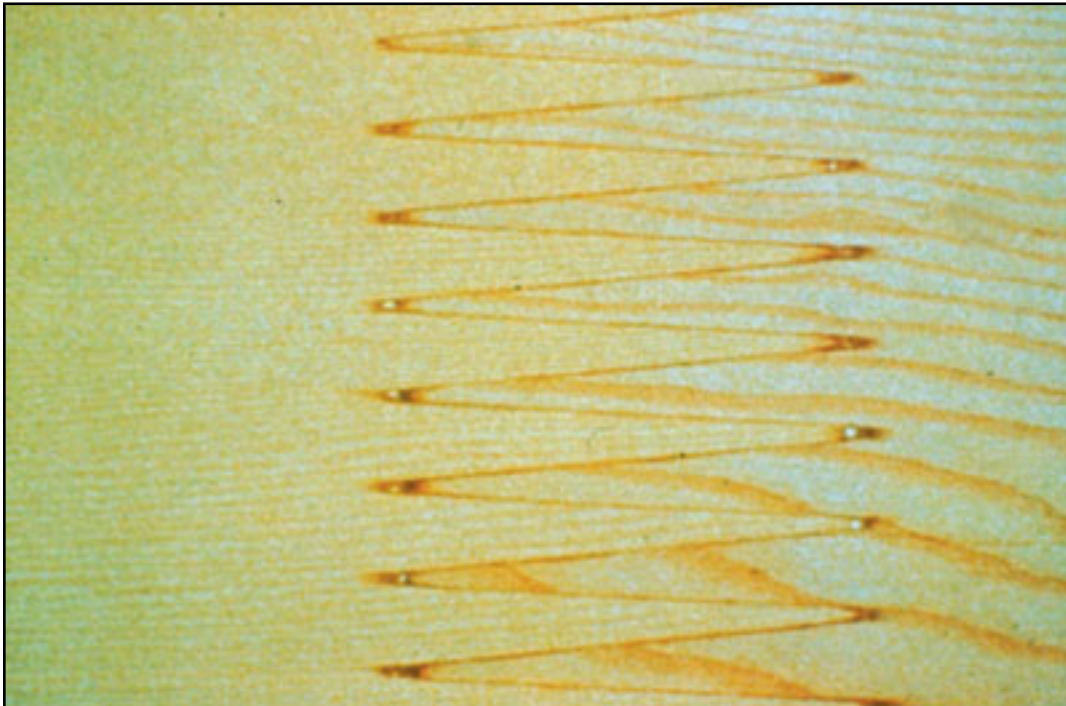


Frequently Asked Questions

Finger Jointed Lumber by Rachel Smith

The topic of finger jointed lumber seems to generate a lot of questions. Can you use it in structural chords and webs? Can you use it as a tension member? Isn't it only for vertical use, like in gable end studs and wall panels? Can you make your own? Can the plates grip in a finger joint? At this point, there are no clear answers. One thing is clear though, truss manufacturers and lumber suppliers are anxious to get these questions answered once and for all.

Coincidentally, Forintek, which is Canada's wood products research institute, is preparing to study these issues in roof and floor trusses. WTCA's Engineering Review Committee will review the results of this project and other finger joint lumber standards to develop a guideline for truss manufacturers. We hope to have this completed within the year.



QUESTION:

I market 2x4 and 2x6 structural finger jointed lumber. As of now we have strictly sold it as a #2 product. However, we ran some through a bender at a sawmill to test the modulus of elasticity and it looks promising. The equipment showed no recognition of the joint; it acted like regular lumber. We would like to go forward with this venture in the hopes of offering an alternative MSR to solid lumber that may also be more cost effective. What do you need to have from us to get your approval?

ANSWER:

Our association is in the process of reviewing existing standards pertaining to finger jointed lumber to determine if additional guidelines are needed for using this material in trusses. ANSI/TPI 1-1995, the current design and manufacturing standard for metal plate connected wood trusses, is silent on this issue.

Lumber used in trusses must be of the minimum grade, size, moisture content and species combination specified by the truss design. As such this material must meet the requirements of the lumber grading agency for each particular grade. These requirements would also apply to finger jointed lumber. In addition, the joints of all finger jointed lumber used in trusses must be "certified exterior joints." Material that is certified as "stud-use only" or "vertical use only" should not be used as a truss member.

We suggest that you contact the lumber grading agency that has jurisdiction in your area and work with them in becoming a certified producer.

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