

# U P D A T E

A PERIODICAL FOR THE HOMEOWNER

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Whenever you see the usual silver colour of the ageing pine turn to a black colour, the black shakes are likely being attacked by an airborne fungus. As the micro organism migrates to the damper areas of the shake as the surface dries out, the rot is usually hard to spot without careful observation. The damper spots are generally underneath the shake, and by the time you see the dry checkered rot on the surface, it may be more serious than first thought. Pine shake manufacturers in Alberta became aware of an airborne fungus causing pine shake rot in 1997. Most companies quit making them, and have only sold treated pine shakes since.

The condition would appear to be more advanced in Northern Alberta than down south, likely because the moisture levels are greater, the winds less, and the snow stays longer (no Chinooks). The airborne fungus attaches itself to the pine shakes that contain sapwood. The sapwood comprises approximate 15-30% of the roof. Alberta is one of the few places that have ever allowed untreated pine shakes, and that the theory was that they should have been fine in any area with under 500 mm of annual precipitation. This problem does not appear to be affecting cedar to the same degree at this time.

Since 1998 the Alberta building code has not allowed the installation of untreated pine shakes. Treated pine shakes are easily recognized when first installed by a green colour. Overtime time the colour fades to the more common weathered grey colour.

Typically in the Edmonton area the life expectancy of untreated pine shakes is any where from 8 to 12 years. Most untreated roof covers at 12 years are showing extensive decay and deterioration.

In some cases only the underlayment is left to protect the house from water penetration. Complete replacement is the only solution.

