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DIVERSIFORM UTILIZATION OF WEST SIBERIAN WOOD

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The coniferous taiga zone of West Siberia stretches from the Arctic Circle to a line running through Tobol'sk, Tomsk, and Krasnoyarsk; it is broken only by rivers and roads, cities, workers' settlements, villages, fields, and meadows. South of the taiga comes the birch forest zone and then the Siberian steppe.

West Siberia forests are composed of pine, birch, larch, cedar, fir, aspen, spruce, and other trees. Hundreds of different products are made from the wood of these West Siberia forests.

Birchwood goes into skis and snowshoes, gun stocks, plywood, spools, weaving machine shuttles, parts for combines, threshing machines, winnowing machines, and other agricultural machines, dishware, shafts, sleds, wagons, cobbler's nails, shoe lasts, children's toys, chess pieces, and furniture. From birch bark, a lining for boots and shoes is made; this lining keeps out moisture and provides the sole with flexibility. Birchwood is also a valuable material for the production of acetic acid, alcohol, and other chemicals.

Pinewood is used for producing lumber, shingles, electric light poles, and squared timber for oil derricks. It is also used in the production of pit props, pontoons, railroad ties, barges and boats, steamship and railroad car interior sheathing, parts for sport planes, truck bodies, frame houses, barrels, and boxes. Each cubic meter of pit-prop timber permits the mining of 15-20 tons of coal.

From cedarwood, Soviet industry manufactures pencils, furniture veneer, lumber for window sills, cigarette and tobacco cases, all kinds of packing containers, aromatic shavings for packing fruit, fine furniture, and drawing boards.

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Because of its water-resisting properties, durability, and high specific gravity, larch wood is used in the production of piles, squared timber for bridges, railroad ties, and foundation timber for buildings. Larch wood used for these purposes will not rot for 300-500 years.

Spruce wood is made into timber for shipbuilding, lumber for musical instrument production, railroad ties, and pulp for cellulose, viscose rayon, and paper production. It is possible to produce 200-250 kilograms of paper from a cubic meter of spruce pulp.

Aspen wood goes into the production of matches, various kinds of packing containers, roofing shingles, paper, and cardboard. From one cubic meter of aspen blocks, it is possible to make more than a million matchsticks (22,000 boxes) or to produce 300 kilograms of cardboard.

Siberian woods are also used widely in the wood chemical industry. If mechanical wood processing permits the production of about 500 different products, chemical processing raises the line of products to about 20,000.

The most common chemically processed wood product is charcoal, used for steel smelting and purifying sugar sirup.

Soviet wood chemists have begun to utilize the smoke resulting from wood combustion and are recovering wood alcohol, acetic acid, and other products from it. Through dry distillation of coniferous woods at wood chemical plants, they obtain wood alcohol, turpentine, resin, and carbon. From deciduous woods (birch, aspen), they obtain acetic acid, wood alcohol, carbon, and other products. One cubic meter of birchwood yields 10-15 kilograms of acetic acid, 100 kilograms of carbon, 5 kilograms of wood alcohol, and 35 kilograms of resin. Acetic acid is used widely in engineering and the food, pharmaceutical, and lacquer industries. It is also used in the production of acetate rayon.

Fine rayon is made from spruce wood. One cubic meter of wood yields 1,500 meters of viscose rayon.

Starch, sugar, and ethyl alcohol are also obtained from West Siberian woods. Using the method of S. V. Lebedev, Soviet scientists produce synthetic rubber out of ethyl alcohol.

Processing of one cubic meter of wood into synthetic wool may yield 165 meters of cloth.

Formalin and aspirin, medical turpentine, bakelite and urotropine, cellophane and cellulose, synthetic camphor and indigo, motion-picture film, paper dishes, pressed gears, and shatterproof glass are some of those diversiform products which modern engineers produce from wood.

A very valuable food product of the Siberian taiga is the Siberian cedar nut. It contains up to 60 percent oil, 20 percent albumin, and 12 percent starch, sugar, and vitamins. Cedar nuts have a higher food value than meat and milk.

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