



# REDCEDAR UTILIZATION

*Redcedar forest located in the Loess Canyons region of southwest Nebraska*

*Eastern redcedar management has become a topic of much discussion. Identifying utilization and wood products opportunities for redcedar wood will be key to increasing management and reducing it's impact on the landscape.*

## BACKGROUND

Eastern redcedar (cedar) is a native tree that has always been a fixture on the Nebraska landscape, providing valuable wood products, wind and soil protection and habitat for a variety of species of wildlife. However, the rapid spread of cedar is an increasingly serious ecological and economic issue with substantial impacts statewide.

While cedar management has largely centered around the use of prescribed fire and mechanical equipment, the development of wood products and markets for cedar material could increase harvest and management, while providing an economic boost for rural communities, businesses and landowners.



*When wood markets are not available, cedar wood waste is piled and burned.*

## CEDAR WOOD CHARACTERISTICS

While cedar is sometimes portrayed as being a low-quality wood resource, some characteristics of cedar make it well-suited for use in wood products.

- When growing in dense stands of trees, cedars grow tall and straight trunks, desirable for use in producing sawlog products such as lumber
- As cedars mature, the heartwood (wood at the center of the trees) becomes an attractive deep red or purple color with a pale yellow outer sapwood
- Regarded as having excellent resistance to decay and insect attack, making it very durable
- Has a very aromatic scent making it a preferred species for interior finishings and closet lining
- Wood is considered easy to work with and glues and finishes well
- Shrinks less during drying than other species



*Redcedar log showing heartwood color*



In 2014, Nebraska sawmills produced 870,000 board feet of sawlog products such as lumber, paneling and fencing from cedar.





In 2014, Nebraska businesses produced 61,000 feet of fence posts, equivalent to 105,000 four inch diameter fence posts... enough posts to build a fence from South Dakota to Kansas.

## **CEDAR PRODUCTS PRODUCED**

### ***Traditional Wood Products***

Nebraska's forest products industry has embraced cedar as a valuable resource in Nebraska's forests. Suitable for many applications, cedar is currently used to produce a variety of wood products including...

- Green lumber
- Kiln-dried lumber
- Interior paneling
- Fence posts
- Finished furniture
- Cabinets and counter tops
- Shingles and siding
- Animal bedding



Cedar lumber produced at The Sawle Mill in Springview, NE

### ***Processed Wood Products***

While the characteristics of cedar wood in larger trees make it suitable for manufacturing traditional wood products, low-quality materials such as small trees, branches and sawmill waste are also used to make a variety of products including...

- Woody biomass heating fuel to heat the campus of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture
- Woodchips road underlayment to reduce erosion on farm roads and center pivot irrigation tracks
- Compost and other soil amendments

## **IMPORTANCE OF CEDAR UTILIZATION**

Developing wood products using cedar is a crucial tool for addressing cedar impacts across the landscape. Unlike most management strategies, wood products manufacturing...

- provides the opportunity for economic gain for the landowner through the sale of cedar wood
- reduces the cost of management and can facilitate future management by reinvesting the revenue generated from the sale of cedar wood
- reduces the environmental impact of management by avoiding the harmful air emissions released during pile burning
- provides economic opportunities for rural businesses and communities



Cedar logs awaiting processing at The Sawle Mill in Springview, NE