



Ventilation Tips: Wood Roofing Underlayment

How Do You Protect Your Wood Roof?

A homeowner's guide to protecting wood roofs

Few roofing materials can provide the durability and beauty of natural wood. But while they provide a distinctive, elegant look, wood shingles and shakes need extra care during installation and maintenance in order to ensure the value of the sizeable investment. For example, an average cedar roof can cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

One of the mistakes that can ruin a wood roof is installing the shingles or shakes directly onto the plywood roof deck. Without a way for the wood to "breathe," the roof is subject to premature failure and shortened roof life. Here's why:

Natural Wood Cedar Shingles Hold Moisture

Cedar shingles are natural wood products that hold moisture from rain, snow, or a damp, humid day. While the sun dries the exposed or top side of a cedar shingle, the shingle's underside affixed directly to a plywood deck holds moisture longer, preventing the shingle from drying evenly, and eventually causing thermal cupping or splitting. As a result, cedar shingles will split, warp, curl, and break off, resulting in premature roof failure.

The Answer—Cedar Breather

Benjamin Obdyke's Cedar Breather is a patented three-dimensional nylon underlayment that provides a continuous air space necessary for cedar shingles to dry evenly. Cedar Breather is rolled out over 30-lb. felt on a roof deck. Cedar shingles are then installed over Cedar Breather, per manufacturer's instructions. (See installation instructions) Cedar Breather is also an excellent ventilation device for wood siding, providing a rainscreen to allow moisture to escape from behind the siding.

It works powerfully to help ensure roof success, but Cedar Breather adds as little as 1/10 to the cost of a cedar roof. It also eliminates the need for expensive lathe or strapping. Cedar Breather truly is the solution for keeping wood roofs healthy and beautiful.

