

# TECHNICAL NOTES

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FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY

U. S. FOREST SERVICE

MADISON, WISCONSIN

No. 108

## CHARRING DOES NOT PRESERVE WOOD

Charring is of little value in protecting the butts of fence posts and telephone poles from decay. This is shown by service tests made by the U. S. Forest Products Laboratory on fences of charred and untreated posts of various species. The charred posts proved in these tests to be even less durable than the untreated ones.

Theoretically, an area of charred wood around a post should prevent decay, because charcoal does not decay or encourage the growth of fungi. But the charred area around a post is not usually a solid covering. It is checked through in many places. If posts are seasoned before they are charred, the charring does not reach to the bottom of the season checks which are always present. If green unchecked posts are charred, checks will open through the charred part as the wood seasons. In either case the uncharred center of the post is exposed to fungus infection and will decay as rapidly as any untreated wood.

Charring deep enough to resist decay would undoubtedly weaken a post of ordinary size.

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