

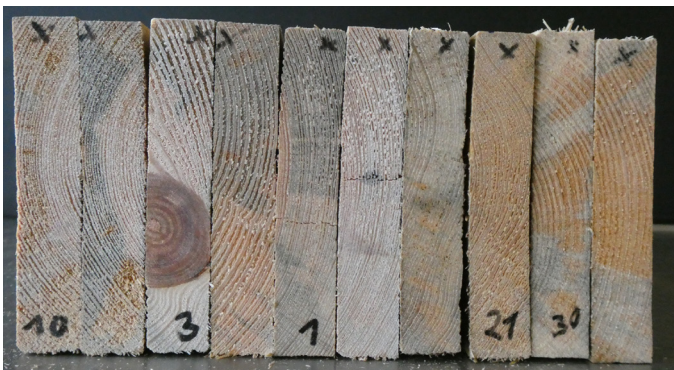
NEWS 2023 - RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT STUDY

Blue stain fungi have no effect on the quality of EPAL wooden pallets

Dresden, February 2023.

When transporting and storing goods, users are dependent on the availability of quality load carriers that meet all hygiene and safety requirements. The protection of the loaded goods and the safety of the staff involved in handling them is paramount. Blue stained pallets are often a cause for concern and uncertainty among users from industry and trade.

On behalf of EPAL Deutschland*, the Dresden Institute for Wood Technology (IHD) has now investigated the effect of blue stain on the quality of pallet wood. Under the direction of biologist Katharina Plaschkies, the technical and hygienic properties of the woods permitted for use in the production and repair of EPAL pallets were examined under the influence of blue stain fungi.



Representative boards in cross section, showing blue stain

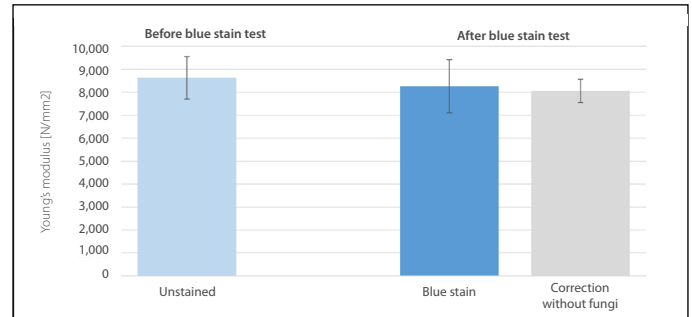
The tests came to the following result:

"Generally it must be stated that in the production of pallets licensed as complying with the technical specifications of EPAL, the growth of destructive fungi in the wood can be almost entirely ruled out."

"The quality of EPAL pallets is not reduced by blue stain and wood-discolouring fungi."

According to the technical specifications of EPAL, the wood moisture content of the boards used must not exceed 22%. Heat treatment in accordance with ISPM 15 means that the risk of fungal infestation with fungi is kept to an absolute minimum. Nevertheless, the pallets may become damp at any time during storage or transport. This may lead to a new infestation with fungi. The optical imperfection caused by fungi is however of no significance, as EPAL load carriers do not have to fulfil any aesthetic function – only the technical requirements placed on them. The hygienic assessment shows that there is no danger to health from blue stain in timber caused by blue stain fungi. This was confirmed in 2019 by the German Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt – UBA).

The mechanical properties have now been tested by the IHD using bending tests. For this, representative boards with and without blue stain were tested. On 20 samples, no significant change in wood strength caused by blue stain could be established.



Particularly interesting for users:

The study also showed that blue stain fungi reduce the moisture absorption of the wood and thus inhibit the growth of dangerous mould.

"Blue stain is permissible, as it only affects the appearance of the wood and does not impair its mechanical properties."

To summarise, it was established that the quality of EPAL wooden load carriers is not affected by blue stain fungi and they can thus be used for their designated purpose without restriction.

■ www.epal-deutschland.de

Hardfacts:

- Results of study on the influence of blue stain fungi on pallet wood quality, from February 2023
- Study was carried out by the independent Dresden Institute of Wood Technology, a globally active research institute
- The quality of the timbers used for EPAL pallets is not negatively affected at all by blue stain fungi
- Blue stain fungi reduce the moisture take-up of the timber and thus hinder the growth of fungi

*formerly Gütegemeinschaft Paletten e. V.