

Debarking Hickory and Basswood

Those of you who work with hardwood already know hickory and basswood are a pain regardless of the type of debarker you use. They're such a pain that we've seen mills skip debarking with these woods! The issues with debarking these species are at their worst in spring and summer when bark slippage occurs. When loggers harvest these trees at that time of year, the bark comes off in mats or large chunks as they're processed and will plug everything.

Stringy bark like that from hickory and basswood will immediately show the flaws in a poorly designed system. The better the design of the system, the better it can handle anomalies and debark more efficiently. The worse the system—well, there's a reason some sawmills don't debark these species. But if you want to address the flaws in and enhance your system, you must look at debarking with the same importance as any other part of the manufacturing process. Operations personnel typically do not do this, though good debarking aids yield, value, and throughput.

Bad debarking, of course, does not. It hinders them. Bad debarking leads to:

- Poor scanning
- Fiber loss
- Dull saws from leftover dirt/sand (poor debarking)
- Poor decisions about how to best process a log
- Frequent knife changes
- Knife scratches
- Excessive hand planning
- Unscheduled downtime

Flares will magnify these issues on both a rosserhead or a ring debarker, but flares can be acutely damaging to ring debarkers, especially if the logs are loaded the wrong way. And flutes on the flares will also trap more dirt, sand, and rocks than the rest of the trunk. Good debarking therefore removes the flares before the contaminants therein contact mill machinery.

Enhancing the design starts with a debarker made to cut this stringy bark rather than beat it off. But good overall design looks beyond the debarker to include waste removal, surge areas, and flare reduction (if applicable). It treats debarking as an integral part of production. Only by addressing all these aspects will the system work efficiently day in and out—even when processing hickory and basswood.

If a well-designed system is what you're looking for, [contact us](#). We have the skills and know-how to provide you an efficient, well-thought-out [debarking system](#) that will increase your throughput and make you more productive.