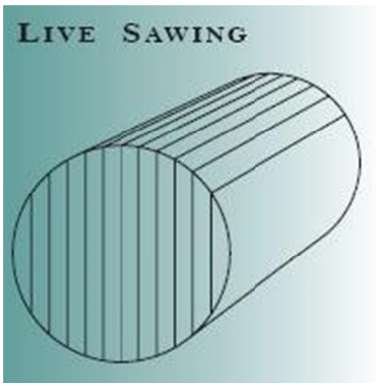
Timber Recovery & Conversion

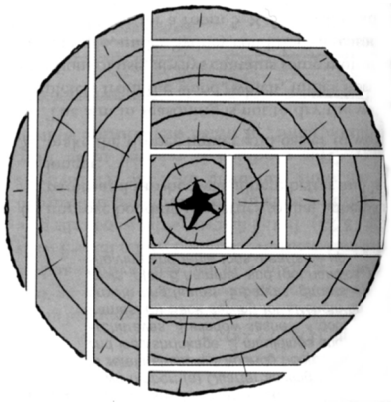
Sawing – Live, Quarter & Back

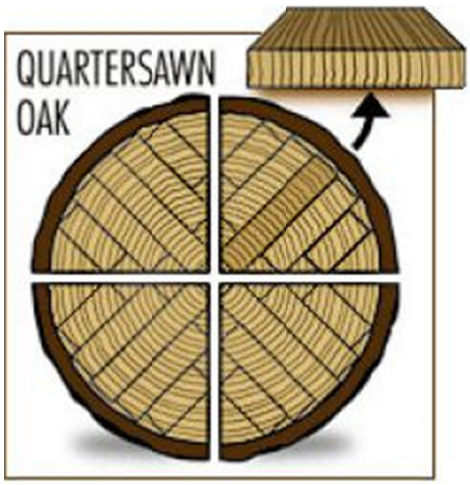
Timber is generally converted by one of three methods. These are Live Sawing, Back Sawing and Quarter Sawing. All methods of timber conversion can be done using extremely large circular saws and live sawing and back sawing can also be done using large bandsaw type machines.



Live sawing is the easiest way to convert timber into boards. The log is generally pushed into the machine, which can have a number of blades spaced apart from each other, to produce a series of parallel cuts to make boards. Live sawn boards are cheaper than boards produced using the other conversion methods. Live sawing also produces the least waste of the three conversion types. Timber cut this way is very prone to warping during the seasoning process and so it is usually only used for construction work, including fence palings and packing crates.

Back sawing is done to show the growth rings of the timber to their fullest effect. The cuts are made at tangents to the growth rings in order to achieve this. Back sawing is a good conversion method for faulty logs as the pith can be easily cut around and it also produces high strength members. Back sawn boards mainly shrink in width and may cup or warp away from the heart.





Quarter sawing is almost a radial cutting method. Lots of timber is lost as waste using this method and it has a high production cost because of the amount of times the log must be turned when cutting. Timber cut using this method usually seasons very evenly with little distortion or warping. Timbers with distinctive medullary ray figures or an interlocked grain structure are cut using this method to produce highly decorative