



Why Hardwood?

Hardwood flooring has a natural beauty that will give any room a very warm feeling. When building a new home, adding an addition or just taking up old carpeting that doesn't have a hardwood floor beneath, you should look at the wide variety of wood flooring available.

Unlike carpet, 3/4" thick wood flooring can take wear and tear and last well over 100 years with minimum maintenance. When the surface finish wears, or gets scratched over time, you can recoat or sand and refinish the floors to make them new again. The variety and colors of wood flooring available today make it easy to find one that will compliment any design ideas you may have. Hardwood flooring is also the only floor covering that will add resale value to your home.

Type

There are three types of hardwood flooring:

Solid Hardwood Floors - a solid piece of hardwood cut into wood planks that are generally 3/4" thick. For above ground level areas only. Not recommended for concrete slabs.

Engineered Hardwood Floors - several plies of wood that are glued and laminated together to form a wood plank. Range in thickness and can be installed almost anywhere in the home, including over dry concrete slabs.

Exotic Hardwood Floors - used to describe hardwood species from around the world. These hardwoods are not found in North America but come from Africa, Brazil and the Far East. Exotic hardwoods offer unique wood graining and colorations. Most exotic floors are available in both engineered wood and solid planks as well.

~ General Care for Your Hardwood ~

Regularly sweep or vacuum the floor to prevent sand or abrasive dust from accumulating and scratching the surface.



Place doormats outside and rugs inside at every entrance of the house, again to prevent sand or abrasive debris from accumulating on the floor.



Place a rug in front of the kitchen sink, kitchen work stations, and the dishwasher to protect the floor from dropped accessories and from water or oily detergent spills



Use adequate floor protections (wood floor protector pads) under all furniture and chair legs in order to prevent scratching the floor.



The relative humidity level in your home must be maintained at 45% throughout the year. Hardwood substances react to changes of relative humidity.



Keep the "high heel" shoes in good condition. Damaged or worn high heels may expose a metal tip, which will damage your hardwood floor.



Protect your floor against direct sunlight or any intense source of artificial lighting.

(Over for More Hardwood Facts)

Species

Decisions abound when selecting just the right wood for the rooms in your home. There are several species, colors and grain variations to consider. After walls, the floor represents the largest expanse of pattern and color in a room. The floor should compliment and enhance the unique personality of the room as a whole. Darker colors are most often used in formal or traditional interiors, while lighter colors work best in country, casual and contemporary settings.

Characteristics

- ❖ The natural characteristics of wood include the grain pattern, dark gray or black marks and knots of various sizes. They result from the unique growth process of each species and are influenced by sunlight, soil and climate. Minerals can appear in several forms including light gray streaks across boards and black lines in the grain.
- ❖ Wood is a natural material and exhibits a wide range of diversity of grain. Additionally, each plank or strip will absorb stain differently. Darker stains usually have a greater impact on masking the natural variations of the wood. The lighter the stain, the more prominent the natural characteristics will be.

Grades & Styles

- ❖ Lumber is graded based upon the intensity of variations of the characteristics described above, with clear grade exhibiting the least number of natural characteristics beyond the distinct grain pattern of each species.
- ❖ Woods styles come in strips, planks, or parquet tiles with numerous edge treatments such as square, micro, and beveled edges. You can choose from a wide range of stains and from several types of finish to complement your décor.

Hardness

All tree species used for hardwood flooring are durable enough to withstand the wear and tear of daily life. However, this does not mean that wood will not dent. As a natural material, wood is made of thousands of cells. When the tree is alive, these cells are filled with water. When the tree is cut into lumber, the moisture in those cells is replaced with air. If a heavy object is dropped on the floor, the air filled spaces will compress, leaving a dent or gash. Heavy furniture and appliances, over time, will also compress the air filled cells of the wood.

Hardness is determined with the Janka rating system. This is the force it takes to drive a .444 inch steel ball to a depth where half the ball is imbedded into the wood. This is a relative hardness table for common hardwood floor materials. *Do not take hardness to mean "best".*