

IPE Decking

Ipe is a wood of extremes: extremely dense and durable, as well as extremely difficult to work. Its incredible hardness and strength make it well suited for decking applications.

IPE Workability

Overall, Ipe is a difficult wood to work, being extremely hard and dense, with high cutting resistance during sawing. This dense and durable characteristic also mean that it holds up very well to high stress and high traffic decks. Straight-grained wood turns well, though the natural powdery yellow deposits can sometimes interfere with polishing or finishing the wood.



What is IPE?

Also called Brazilian walnut, ipe (pronounced ee-pay) wood is typically found in South America and some parts of Central America. It is one of the densest hardwoods available, three times harder than cedar. Ipe has the same fire rating as concrete and steel, meaning it resists flames much longer than softer woods, and is so dense that it doesn't float in water.

Pros

Like redwood, it has a natural oil that keeps bugs out; it's resistant to mildew and decay, making it ideal for coastal construction. Ipe wood lasts a minimum of 25 years, although many architects say it can last up to half a century if maintained properly.

Cons

Holes must be predrilled for screws. Its high oil and tannin content makes it difficult for paint to adhere. The hardness makes it unsuitable for intricate woodworking. It's also difficult to ensure the hardwood comes through legitimate channels. Earlier this year, ipe wood accounted for more than 90% of the wood seized in a major sting by Brazilian authorities. When shopping for ipe wood, look for certification from organizations like the Forest Stewardship Council, which tracks sustainable forestry.

Photo Gallery



