

What is Ipe?

Ipe is also known as Brazilian Walnut and Ironwood. Ipe is a very Dense Straight Grained Tropical hardwood. It is Ipe's heartwood that is used in decking applications and ranges anywhere from an olive brown to blackish colour.

Why is Ipe a good decking material?

Ipe Decking has an extremely attractive appearance and smooth, splinter free surfaces. Ipe air-dries quickly with only slight warping or checking. Movement after manufacturing is rated to be small.

How durable is Ipe decking?

Ipe decking has a durability rating of "25 years plus" and is naturally resistant against rot, wood boring insects and fungus. Our importer, offers a 25 year warranty against rot/decay and termites. This warranty applies whether or not you apply a top coating to your deck.

Do stains or sealers need to be applied to Ipe Decks?

No, the application of stains and sealers is not necessary on Ipe decking; however, it can be stained to basically any desired colour. If left untreated by stains or sealers, Ipe will slowly weather to a natural silver grey colour.

What are some other advantages of Ipe over other materials?

Ipe decking is free of visible knots and defects. It has an extremely attractive appearance while maintaining structural stability for countless years. Also, its resistance to insects, mold and decay is natural; no toxic chemicals are used as a preservative.

In what applications can Ipe decking be used?

Ipe decking has been used in a number of different projects. Some examples for the use of Ipe decking include: patios, decks, walkways, bridges, piers, boat docks, and pool decks.

Is Ipe decking expensive?

Our Ipe decking is reasonably priced and an excellent value for a deck that will last a lifetime. Ipe decking is competitively priced to Cedar, Redwood, or composites.

Let the wood acclimatize

Ipe decking is not only procured from Brazil but is machined there as well. Brazil has a naturally humid climate that differs from ours. Once you receive your decking you should allow the material time to equalize to the environment of your location. This will generally take 1-2 weeks depending on the environment of your location. By doing so, you will reduce the shrinkage between boards after installation. If the wood is not allowed to “pre shrink”, gaps between boards may develop that are wider than the original desired spacing.

The substructure/joist system

For the load-bearing portion of the substructure, a high quality pressure treated product works fine. The Ipe decking will shelter the substructure; therefore, bearing most of the weathering. For these reasons, using treated products for the substructure of your Ipe deck makes the most sense from both a cost and practical standpoint.

Joist spacing

In order to ensure a long and safe service life of your deck we recommend a joist spacing of 16” on centers for 1x4, 1x6, and 1x8 Stock. For 5/4 deck, boards at 24” spacing can be used and 32” for 8/4 material. Depending on the design, shorter joist spacing may be required for installing deck with a diagonal pattern.

End Checking

During installation, exposed end grain after sawing can produce end checking/end cracks. To help reduce end checks, a wax based emulsion; such as a product similar to Anchor Seal can be used.

Ipe Deck spacing

When installing the decking boards, a 1/16” spacing between boards is generally recommended. This will allow for proper air circulation between boards while also minimizing the gap width after natural seasoning of the deck.

Tools

Ipe can be worked with conventional carbide tipped blades and drill bits. The tool life of high-speed steel will be greatly shortened when cutting or drilling Ipe.

Fasteners and fastening systems

Newer fastener systems like the Ipe Clip now offer the benefit of a hidden screw system that eliminates the hassle of pre drilling and saving even more time by automatically spacing the decking boards. These systems are designed to be virtually invisible compared to nails and screws, giving your project a nice finished look without any extra work.

Stains

Ipe can be left in its natural appearance and over time weather to a silvery grey colour. To help preserve the beauty and colour of Ipe, a stain coating can be applied. Before applying any type of stain, brush and wash the decking surface to remove any dust or dirt. UV inhibiting coatings will help to maintain your Ipe's natural walnut colour.

Pricing

Ipe is comparable in price to other conventional decking woods such as clear Cedar and Redwood. It is also within the range of the composite decking products now being offered.

Some Final Odds and Ends

Ipe is an air dried product which minimizes expansion problems that are often seen in composite/plastic materials as well as other wood species. Although Ipe has a smooth texture, it is normal to see some minor surface checking as the deck ages and weathers. In no way will this affect the strength and durability of your deck.