



Which Wood to Use?

There are many types of wood available, how do you know you are choosing the right one for your outdoor furniture? Gates, fences, cladding etc.

Hardwood or Softwood what is the difference?

- 🌲 Hardwood trees are angiosperms - plants that produce seeds with some form of covering i.e. fruit such as an apple or hard shell such as acorn. They also lose their leaves in the cold weather.
- 🌲 Softwood trees are gymnosperms – their seeds have no covering, such as pine trees, the seeds are hard cones. Conifer tree seeds are released into the wind once mature and spread over a wider area. Additionally these trees keep their leaves all year round.

SOFTWOODS

🌲 Western Red Cedar



Renowned for its high decay resistance, though it is not resistant to insect attack, this wood varies in colour and shade, typically a reddish to pinkish brown. It is lightweight and stable; and is an attractive timber that is easy to work with.

Owing to its softness it can dent and scratch easily but it is easy to work with and looks good. It is a great material for cladding or fence panels and it has good finishing properties, taking a variety of coatings, paints and stains exceptionally well.

🌲 Russian or Scandinavian Redwood



Contrary to its name this wood isn't red! It is brown with a reddish tint. It comes in different grades for different uses and knots are common in this timber. Boards vary in width from 100mm – 225mm.

Redwood makes an excellent gate or gate boarding. It is easy to work with and machine, and very stable. It also gives a good planed finish and takes paint, stain and preservative well.

We recommend it for our boarded driveway gates and barn or garage doors.

European Larch



It is a great all-rounder with its popularity increasing as it is specified more by architects and landscapers, due to its strength and durability. It is a tough softwood and ideal for items where physical damage may occur for example gates, fence posts and other exterior applications (cladding, bridges, decking etc.) or where there is going to be ground contact.

It has a natural resistance to rot and fungus making treatment unnecessary, though it will take a preservative or stain. It will turn silvery grey over time.

Gates made out of larch are renowned for their longevity - European larch also gives a good planed finish. Larch should not be used for boards for fence panels due to the knots in the timber.

Spruce



This wood is from a coniferous evergreen tree and can be greyish green to dark greenish / black in colour or in some varieties the total opposite, a pale timber. It is not as resistant to decay as larch so a treatment is advised.

It is a lightweight timber with good strength properties. It is great for fencing panels and accessories as it has fewer knots than larch so gives a fine and even texture. However it is not good with ground contact due to its fibres and does not have a good finish when planed.

HARDWOODS

Iroko



This is a very durable wood ideal for use outdoors. It is initially a stripy yellow / orange but darkens to a richer brown over time, and is a fantastic wood for timber gates and planters. It is especially resistant to rot, insect or fungus attack and can be a low cost alternative to teak at times.

It is a very stable timber with a close grain and less likely than other hardwoods to crack or move and so is great for anywhere outdoors where durability is needed.

It has a good finish and, although advisable to oil iroko products to help prolong their life, it doesn't require regular oil or varnish treatments when used outdoors, unlike redwood. Oiling the iroko will bring out the colours in the wood and prevent the timber from going grey in the sunlight.

Oak



Popular with garden designers and landscapers, oak is a strong and naturally durable timber owing to its density. It is difficult to treat owing to its moisture and acid content, although it naturally has a good resistance to decay. It is light to medium brown in colour though a fair amount of variation can be seen through its grain.

It must be cut, latted, and seasoned well to try and prevent movement.

Oak can be applied to most exterior purposes and owing to its non-toxic properties it is an option for children's play equipment and school landscaping, and is the most popular used wood in Europe. It can take stain very well and if left unfinished over time the colour will silver down and blacken. Alternatively a coat of oil can be given to protect it and enhance it's natural colour.

Oak is not recommended for use in gates due to its tendency to split and crack. It is widely used for timber framed buildings. The tannin in oak can react with black or galvanised ironmongery so it is advisable to use stainless steel fittings.

There are many more varieties of timber available. If you are looking for a specific type or finish contact Duncombe Sawmill for advice and information, as we have the knowledge and expertise you require to make sure your outdoor living space is as comfortable and as practical as you require!