

Naturally Durable Wood: Tips for Durable Exterior Wood Construction

Key Point	Don't, for example:	Do:
Not all naturally durable species are equally decay or termite resistant or dimensionally stable.	Expect all "naturally durable" woods to have ideal characteristics for a specific application.	Read up on the properties of a species before specifying.
Some names for naturally durable wood include several species.	Expect all the species grouped under one name to be equally durable.	Use Latin names to be certain you are getting a durable species.
Only the heartwood of naturally durable species is durable.	Expose sapwood to rain or ground contact.	Put sapwood in protected locations. Select pure heartwood for ground contact.
Plantation-grown woods have wider sapwood and juvenile heartwood.	Expect plantation-grown wood to be as durable as old growth, for example China cedar (fir).	Use plantation grown wood only for semi-protected conditions or short life.
Contrary to popular belief, 2 nd growth cedar from managed forests is as durable as old growth.	Worry about specifying "old growth" western red cedar.	Focus on the desired grade.
Contrary to popular belief, pale cedar heartwood is durable.	Worry about picking out the darker boards.	Focus on colour matching where appearance is important.
Coloured extractives move with water.	Expose ends to liquid water as wicking and drying away from the end can create water marks.	Protect ends by design. Prime or apply water-repellent stain before assembly.
	Use a pale coating without a stain blocking primer	Apply stain-blocking primer
The extractives that provide durability are partly water soluble	Expect a long service life from uncoated wood in high rainfall areas.	Use a water-repellent stain or preservative treatment for longer service life.
	Cut factory finished siding and leave ends uncoated.	At least prime all end grain before assembly.
The extractives that provide durability are gradually biodegradable	Expect a long service life in ground contact.	Use naturally durable woods above ground. Use wraps on posts for ground contact.
	Expect a long service life in non-drying conditions.	Design structure for drying.
Some extractives that provide durability are corrosive. Iron stains the wood black and can locally reduce durability.	Use mild steel or electroplated galvanized nails outdoors.	Use appropriate corrosion-resistant fasteners.

For more detailed information see www.durable-wood.com

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