

YOUR GUIDE TO COMMON WOODWORKING WOODS

Puzzled by which wood to use for what? Much of the choice comes down to personal taste, then cost and availability. But until you know the qualities that help you choose one wood over another, the selection process can be confusing. Use the chart below to acquaint you with the woods in common usage.

WOOD SPECIES	PRICE (1)	AVAILABILITY (2)	HARDNESS	STRENGTH	WEIGHT	RATINGS (3)										USE/COMMENTS	
						STABILITY	ROT RESISTANCE	SPLIT RESISTANCE	MACHINING QUALITY	TURNING	CARVING	PLANING/JOINING	GLUING	SANDING	STAINING		PAINTING
ALDER, RED	\$\$	R	Medium	Weak	Light	G	F	F	G	G	F	G	E	F	E	G	Cabinets, furniture, millwork
ASH, WHITE	\$\$	N	Hard	Strong	Heavy	G	F	G	E	F	P	G	G	E	G	F	Cabinets, furniture, doors
BASSWOOD	\$\$	N	Soft	Weak	Light	G	P	G	E	P	G	G	E	E	G	E	Best for carving
BIRCH, YELLOW	\$\$	R	Hard	Strong	Heavy	G	F	G	E	G	P	G	G	F	G	G	Cabinets, furniture, flooring
BUTTERNUT	\$\$\$	R	Soft	Weak	Light	E	F	F	F	G	G	G	G	F	G	F	Carving, furniture
CEDAR, RED	\$\$	N	Soft	Weak	Light	G	E	P	F	P	P	F	G	P	F	G	Outdoor furniture, decks
CHERRY	\$\$\$\$	N	Hard	Strong	Medium	G	F	F	E	E	G	E	E	E	G	G	Fine furniture, cabinets
CYPRESS	\$\$	R	Medium	Medium	Medium	G	E	F	P	P	P	G	F	F	F	G	Outdoor furniture, decks
DOUGLAS FIR	\$\$	N	Medium	Strong	Medium	F	G	F	G	P	P	G	G	F	F	G	Strong utility wood
HICKORY	\$\$	R	Hard	Strong	Heavy	G	P	F	G	G	P	G	G	E	G	F	Chairs, tables, sporting goods
LAUAN (PHILIPPINE MAHOGANY)	\$\$	N	Medium	Medium	Medium	E	G	P	F	F	P	G	E	P	G	E	Furniture, boats
MAHOGANY	\$\$\$\$	N	Medium	Medium	Medium	E	G	P	E	E	G	G	E	G	E	E	Fine furniture, boats
MAPLE, SUGAR	\$\$\$	N	Hard	Strong	Heavy	G	P	F	E	G	F	G	F	G	G	G	Durable for hard use
OAK, RED	\$\$\$	N	Hard	Strong	Heavy	F	P	F	G	G	P	E	G	E	E	G	Indoor furniture, floors, trim
OAK, WHITE	\$\$\$	N	Hard	Strong	Heavy	F	E	G	G	G	P	E	G	E	E	G	Indoor and outdoor furniture
PINE, WHITE	\$\$\$	N	Soft	Weak	Light	G	F	P	G	G	G	G	E	G	F	G	All-around indoor use
PINE, YELLOW	\$\$	N	Hard	Strong	Heavy	F	F	P	G	G	G	G	F	F	F	G	Carpentry
POPLAR, YELLOW	\$\$	N	Soft	Weak	Medium	G	P	G	F	F	F	G	E	P	G	E	Toys, drawer sides, utility
REDWOOD	\$\$\$	N	Medium	Weak	Light	E	E	G	G	P	P	G	E	P	F	G	All outdoor projects
TEAK	\$\$\$\$	N	Hard	Strong	Medium	E	E	G	E	G	F	E	G	G	G	F	Boats, outdoor furniture
WALNUT	\$\$\$\$	N	Hard	Strong	Heavy	E	G	F	G	E	G	G	E	E	G	F	Fine furniture

NOTES:

1. (\$\$\$\$) Very expensive (\$\$\$) Expensive (\$\$) Least expensive

2. (N) National (R) Regional

3. E Excellent G Good F Fair P Poor

GRADING TERMS

GRADE	CHARACTERISTICS
FAS (First and seconds)	The best grade. Boards 6" and wider, 8' and longer. Almost clear. Yields 83 ² / ₃ percent clear face cuttings 4" or wider by 5' or longer and 3" or wider by 7' or longer.
Selects	Boards 4" and wider, 6' and longer. One side is FAS, the other is No.1 Common. Yields 83 ² / ₃ percent clear face cuttings.
No. 1 Common	Boards are 3" and wider, 4' and longer. Yields 66 ² / ₃ percent clear face cuttings 4" or wider by 2' or longer and 3" or wider by 3' or longer.

BOARD FOOT CALCULATOR

1"-THICK LUMBER

		LENGTH					
		6'	8'	10'	12'	14'	16'
WIDTH	3"	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
	4"	2	2.66	3.33	4	4.66	5.33
	6"	3	4	5	6	7	8
	8"	4	5.33	6.66	8	9.33	10.66
	10"	5	6.66	8.33	10	11.66	13.33
	12"	6	8	10	12	14	16

1 1/4"-THICK LUMBER

		LENGTH					
		6'	8'	10'	12'	14'	16'
WIDTH	4"	2.5	3.33	4.16	5	5.83	6.66
	6"	3.75	5	6.25	7.5	8.75	10
	8"	5	6.66	8.33	10	11.66	13.33
	10"	6.25	8.33	10.41	12.5	14.58	16.66
	12"	7.5	10	12.5	15	17.5	20

2"-THICK LUMBER

		LENGTH					
		6'	8'	10'	12'	14'	16'
WIDTH	6"	6	8	10	12	14	16
	8"	8	10.66	13.33	16	18.66	21.33
	10"	10	13.33	16.66	20	23.33	26.66
	12"	12	16	20	24	28	32