**BUILDING A SOLID TIMBER DECK**

You want to build a natural timber deck. Nothing beats the look of natural timber, so you’re off to a good start. Now all you have to do is choose your decking timber.

Rather than look at every species of timber on the planet that’s rated for outdoor use, look first at these seven popular decking timbers. One of them is sure to be just right for your deck and pocketbook.

**1. Treated pine**

Treated pine is the “new kid on the block.” It’s grown to become one of the most popular decking timbers because it is one of the least expensive options and can make a great looking deck.

Pine takes stain or paint well, so you can make your deck any colour you like. Treated pine is not all alike, though. The “H” (Hazard) rating will tell you if its suitable for outdoor use and if the posts can come in contact with the ground. A good decking supplier can help you choose the right “H” rating for your decking, joists, posts and other components.

**2. Jarrah**

Some homeowners won’t settle for anything less than jarrah. Jarrah is more expensive than many other decking timbers, but its beautiful colour, which ranges from light to very dark browns and reds, makes it a popular choice.

If left unsealed, jarrah turns a pleasing grey colour over time. Jarrah has a durability rating of 2, which makes it a good timber for decking. It is also fire-resistant and may be suitable for use in fire-prone areas.

**3. Blackbutt**

Blackbutt is another highly fire resistant timber. An Australian native, blackbutt has a lovely pale brown colour and unlike some other native species, the colour is fairly consistent. Blackbutt can be stained if desired. It can check (crack) if left unsealed, so should be sealed as soon as possible and resealed periodically.

**4. Spotted Gum**

Spotted gum, like jarrah and blackbutt, is a good choice for bushfire prone areas. It has a durability rating of 2, which makes it a good timber for decking. Spotted gum is often plantation grown in Australia, making it a good choice from an environmental standpoint.

It has greater colour variations than blackbutt, ranging from a pale brown to chocolate brown. Spotted gum is a dense timber that shrinks very little compared with other timbers. It has low tannin content, so doesn’t “bleed” like some native timbers do.

**5. Merbau**

In the past, merbau was one of the most popular decking timbers and was even used to build house frames. It is still a popular decking timber and is less expensive than most other decking timbers.

Merbau has a high durability rating of 2 and is rot and insect resistant. Much of the merbau used today comes from Southeast Asian rainforests. Look for sustainably harvested merbau. It may cost a little more, but it sends the message that we care about the environment.

**6. Stringybark**

Stringybark (sometimes written stringy bark) comes in three colour variations: white, yellow and red. White stringybark has a durability rating of 3 and may not be suitable for outdoor use. Yellow stringybark has a durability rating of 2, so is suitable for decking. Red stringbark is less common and may be more expensive than yellow.

Most decking builders use yellow stringybark because of its price and durability. Worm holes and gum veins are present in stringy bark. For some, these variations are welcome, but others prefer a more consistent appearance.

**7. Ironbark**

If you want a deck that will last forever (or almost), then ironbark is what you’re looking for. The timber got its name because of its heaviness and high density. It is a difficult timber to work with due to its density, but has the highest possible durability rating of 1.

Ironbark is a beautiful timber, with colours ranging from pale brown to deep red. Aside from being one of the most durable timbers, ironbark is also highly fire, termite and rot resistant. If you’re looking for pool decking, ironbark may be your best choice.