



Withstanding the TEST of TIME

PRESSURE-TREATED LUMBER PROVIDES A SMART OPTION FOR HOMEOWNERS SEEKING TO INCORPORATE THE BEAUTY OF WOOD INTO THEIR OWN BACKYARD OASIS. *BY HUCK DEVENZIO*

RECREATING NATURE, OR A TAMED, orderly version of the great outdoors, has long been the goal of landscape architects. For this reason, such artists have often turned to wood, a natural, renewable product that is easy to cut, shape and fasten. In decks, walkways, gazebos, retaining walls, fences, planter boxes, tree collars, driveway edging and other landscape structures, timber serves as a convenient, attractive, economical material.

But despite its natural appearance and desirable characteristics, lumber and structural timbers are vulnerable to wood-destroying organisms when placed outdoors. Thus, wood can rot and termites can destroy it. For longer-lasting projects, lumber needs an element of added protection. When pressure treated into lumber, such wood preservatives as copper azole provide varying elements of protection for common species of wood, including pines and firs. These preservatives enable such woods to withstand fungal decay and termites for decades without detracting from their natural appearance.

TOP TIPS FOR CHOOSING LUMBER

Since preserved wood withstands the test of time, it is wise to take care in both the selection and installation processes. First, search for a grade of wood that suits your fancy. Treated wood is available in various grades, from high grades with few knots to more rustic-looking variations. As one might expect, the higher grades typically cost more. Consider buying lower, structurally sound grades for posts and support material. Reserve higher grades for deck flooring and conspicuous components.

Lumber grades should be shown on price cards in the lumber store. If they are



not there, look on the wood itself. Grades, as determined by certified graders, appear as part of an ink stamp imprinted on each piece of lumber.

Next, make sure the wood is properly treated. Every piece of treated lumber comes complete with a tag containing useful information. Though the printing may be tiny, the tag shows the intended use for that specific piece of lumber, and the information is helpful. For example, if it says, “Above Ground,” the wood should not be used in ground contact, or it may fail prematurely. Furthermore, look for an indication that the wood was treated to

standards of the American Wood-Preservers’ Association (AWPA) and for the logo of an independent inspection agency that monitored the production. Building codes require third-party inspection by an accredited agency; you should, too.

For decking, consider inquiring about built-in water repellent and re-drying after treatment. Such extra features reduce the likelihood of warping and extend the appearance of a project.

Finally, check for a warranty and remember to search for a brand name. The most familiar brand name in treated wood is “Wolmanized®”; the most famil-

Preserved wood is a beautiful, economical landscaping material that is designed to withstand decay for decades.

iar brand name for decking is “Thompsonized®.” The Wolmanized brand has been around for nearly a century, is well respected in the industry and has earned the Good Housekeeping Seal.

ENDLESS DESIGN OPTIONS

When incorporating pools, spas and decorative water features into a landscape, consider utilizing wood structures to harmo-

* For More Information REGARDING DECKS AND PRESERVED WOOD, VISIT THE FOLLOWING:

» wolmanizedwood.com

Get the facts on Wolmanized wood. Review products, get tips from pros, find retailers, discover helpful links and more.

» decks.com

Your one-stop shop for all things deck related. Search for deck builders and contractors, obtain need-to-know info, read trend articles and more.

» diyonline.com

A treasure trove of ideas for the do-it-yourselfer, this site also features the NEW Deck Designer to assist in the design/build process.

» deckplans.com

Featuring the floating foundation deck system, this site offers deck plans and other deck design and support tools free of charge.

» decksusa.com

Home of the Deck Designs™ software, this site also features accessory plans, custom design services, computer software and contractor support.

» archdeck.com

Online home of the deck builder with more than 65,000 projects worldwide, this site features various decking products, design ideas and more.

» southernpine.com

A service of the Southern Pine Council, this site boasts a product locator and includes info on pressure-treated lumber, sustainability and more.



niously blend the various elements. For example, a spa can be a brilliant addition when built into a wood deck. Many decks also provide an attractive, functional pool surround. Both in-ground and above-ground pools become more accessible and enjoyable when a surrounding deck provides convenience for lounging or play.

An assortment of deck plans is available in various magazines and home improvement books. Research different blueprints for pool and spa surrounds or for a simple deck attached to your home. You can also create your own personalized deck design using software programs available on CDs or online. The same is true for fencing, storage sheds, pergolas and other backyard structures.

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When building a project, be sure to follow all handling and other instructions for treated wood. Also consider performing periodic preventive maintenance for applications where you want to prolong the appearance of your wood. Pressure-treated preservatives protect against termites and rot, but annual application of a water-repellent coating is recommended for defense against moisture damage. Some stains do contain water repellent.

When using preserved wood in landscaping, you harmonize with the natural environment. You also gain a long-lasting, renewable product that requires less energy to produce than comparable alternatives, not to mention the attractive price point. Pressure-treated wood is often the most economical option. For these reasons and more, pressure-treated lumber provides a smart choice for anyone seeking to incorporate the beauty of wood into their own backyard oasis.

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