

Mahogany's Beauty and Durability Makes it Ideal for Deck Construction

A couple of years ago I had the chance to tour several newly constructed Adirondack homes. One of the areas that particularly stood out for me while touring these homes were the decks. All used Mahogany lumber for both the decking and the railing systems. The red color and the general beauty of the Mahogany wood was unique to anything I had ever seen before in decking material. After completing my home tours I went out and researched Mahogany further. First, there are several species and colors of Mahogany, supplied by various countries around the world. Not all are the same, however. It is the species known as American Mahogany that has the rich red color that I had observed. American Mahogany comes from the West Indies, Mexico, and Central and South America. It is generally viewed as a harder wood that is extremely durable and resistance to moisture and insects. Also, because it is a hard wood it has a tendency to not split, twist or check. So be sure to ask about the species, prior to buying Mahogany. Note however, Mahogany is a little more expensive than pressure treated decking and railing systems, however it is well worth it in terms of quality, looks and durability. Since discovering and researching Mahogany, I have built two deck systems using this material. As I had indicated earlier, it is a hard material that as a result, requires a little more effort in its installation. Fastening the Material First, use stainless steel nails or screws on both the decking and railing systems, as other types will not penetrate this material very well. My preference was the stainless steel nails, however pre-drilling holes is mandatory if not using a nail gun. Even with stainless steel nails, they will bend trying to simply nail them into the wood. I found that with the stainless steel hex head screws that they chewed the wood going in and left somewhat of a ragged finish on the surface of the wood. Second, when installing the decking material, I found it aesthetically most attractive to create a frame on the outside perimeter of the deck surface using long Mahogany boards. Once the outer frame is installed, the main Mahogany decking boards can be simply installed within this outer framework. The result is a cleaner line when viewed from a distance or standing on the deck itself. Regarding the Railing system, screws and bolts should be used exclusively as the material use in this part of the deck is typically thicker and requires more rigidity. Painting, Staining or Sealing Mahogany takes paint and stain well, however I have preferred to apply a clear sealer. The clear sealer enables the natural red color of the Mahogany to shine through, while still providing a layer of protection from the environment. Typically I re-apply the clear sealer every year to continue to preserve the color. If you do not, the Mahogany will bleach out.

About the Author

The ideals that have lighted my way, and time after time have given me new courage to face life cheerfully, have been Kindness, Beauty, and Truth.

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