

PRESS RELEASE

Choosing the right timber for your DIY project

We speak to Warren Budde from Swartland's Col Timbers, leading supplier of quality PAR timber, on how to select the right wood for your next DIY project.

27 November 2019, Johannesburg: Novice woodworkers often make the mistake of thinking that all wood is the same. In actual fact, it isn't – there are a number of aspects that need to be considered in order to make the correct selection for your DIY project. Says Warren Budde from Swartland's Col Timbers, leading supplier of quality PAR timber: "The right wood will help ensure the perfect end result of your DIY project. It will also dictate the strength and durability of the finished product. In fact, choosing the right wood is probably one of the most important steps for any woodworking project."

Hardwood and softwood

Warren explains that the first thing that you need to think about is the difference between hardwood and softwood: "Col Timbers, differentiated in-store by its ends that have been painted yellow, offers two different types of PAR timber – namely softwood (Pine) and hardwood. As its name implies, softwood timber is softer than its hardwood counterparts, it grows much quicker, and it tends to absorb and lose more moisture. For all these reasons, it is less expensive than hardwood timber.

"Hardwood timber on the other hand, comes from deciduous trees, which take longer to grow. It is much harder, more durable, and generally more resilient to moisture, and therefore, it is situated on the upper end of the price spectrum. Due to its enviable qualities, it is often used for high quality furniture, flooring, and cabinetry for example. However, the project that you select, as well as your budget, will largely determine whether you use hardwood, softwood, or a combination of both."

Look for stability

Wood does change and "move" over time, however, the less it moves, the more stable it is deemed to be. "Timber with a vertical grain is regarded as the most stable, and it is essential for making the likes of fine furniture doors for example. Col Timbers offers PAR timber that is amongst the most stable on the market. The secret to its quality and durable PAR timber is in the drying. Similar to all of Swartland's other timber products, at Col Timbers we kiln-dry our timber to an optimal moisture content, which keeps the wood in perfect balance with atmospheric conditions, thereby stabilising the timber and minimising natural movement," explains Warren.

Avoid wood with defects

Because they are natural products, both hardwood and softwood timber have defects, and although you can design around the majority of defects, when it comes to structural lumber, defects should be kept to a minimum. Warren says that you should be on the lookout for the following common defects:

- **Bow:** Warp on the face of a board from end to end.
- **Cup:** Hollow across the face of the board.
- **Crook:** Warp along the edge line, also known as crown.
- **Split:** Crack going all the way through the piece of wood, commonly at the ends.
- **Twist:** Warping in lumber where the ends twist in opposite directions.
- **Check:** Crack along the wood's annual growth rings, not passing through the entire thickness of the wood.
- **Shake:** Separation of grain between the growth rings, often extending along the boards, face and sometimes below its surface
- **Wane:** Missing wood or untrimmed bark along the edge or corner of a piece.

Other things to look out for include large knots and insect holes, which can seriously negate the strength of the timber. "All PAR timber offered by Col Timbers has undergone rigorous quality checks before it leaves the factory, in order to make sure that you can have peace of mind that none of Col Timber's PAR timber has any of the defects listed," explains Warren.

Differentiating quality

Warren notes that there are a number of things that you can keep an eye out that will differentiate good quality PAR timber from its inferior quality counterparts – he lists them below:

Laminated timber: Laminated timber is made by gluing timber together, under pressure and heat. The resulting product is strong, stable, and rigid. Col Timbers offers selected PAR timber that is laminated to improve strength and stability, providing stable lengths of timber for your convenience.

It's all in the finish: Look for PAR timber with a good quality finish. This will save you time, and ensure a professionally finished product, as you won't need to sand or plane the product beforehand. It also saves you money as it ensures that you are paying for what you can use, and that the wood only needs one coat of paint at the end of the project.

Consistency and availability: Select PAR timber that is consistently and easily available, so that if you run out, you can source extra timber should you need it. Col Timbers for example offer a wide range of sizes, at consistently high quality, at a wide variety of outlets – to make sourcing PAR timber convenient, easy and affordable.

Environmentally aware: Wood is a renewable resource if it is sourced from sustainably managed forests. Do your bit for the environment, and choose PAR timber from reputable brands that boast excellent sustainable principles. FSC-

approved pine timber procurement by Col Timbers for example, ensures that precious resources are responsibly managed. High-tech machinery in its factory, also helps to reduce wastage and minimise environmental impact.

ENDS

Released on behalf of Col Timbers (www.coltimbers.co.za) by The Line (www.theline.co.za).