

Australian Standards Grades

Hardwood—AS 2976

Select Grade — Contains features of a limited number and size. The features may include gum veins, past borer activity and small knots. The effect in a floor is that features are observable but they do not dominate the overall appearance.



Blackbutt – Select Grade

Medium Feature/Standard Grade — The number, type and size of features present is greater than for Select Grade and the effect on the character of the floor is in many instances much more dominant. Gum veins that are present may extend across the face of the board, greater natural discolouration is also present. Knots and past borer activity can also be more pronounced. Such features add to the character of the floor. It should, however, be noted that the features present and resulting character is very much dependent on the species chosen.



Blackbutt Medium Feature – Standard Grade

High Feature Grade — Boards with a high degree of feature are permitted in this grade and this can add a lot of character to the floor creating a more rustic look. The number and size of features included are greater than for Medium Feature/Standard Grade but again the choice of species will have an overriding influence on the character present.



Blackbutt High Feature Grade

Softwood—AS 4785 and Cypress—AS 1810

The standard AS 4785 includes a range of softwoods. Cypress, although a softwood, has its own grading standard. Cypress flooring has a predominance of knots whereas in other softwoods both knotty and clearer grades can generally be obtained.

Australian Timber Flooring Association

ABN 16 524 524 226

11 Oleander Avenue
Shelly Beach Queensland 4551

T (07) 5492 8696 OR 0409 878 093

E admin@atfa.com.au W www.atfa.com.au

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Australian timber flooring association

Timber Floor Colour and Grade

Both timber species and timber grade determine the desired 'colour' and 'character'



C o l o u r

The choice of species influences the colour of a floor.

The many timber species used in timber floors provide us with a rich array of colours and grain patterns. In some species, the natural colours will be fairly consistent while others can involve a blend of several colours and tones. This is particularly the case where the sapwood (the outer layer of timber beneath the bark) is often much lighter in colour than the heartwood. Even within a single species and within individual trees, large colour variations of the heartwood can occur. In addition, the age of the tree has a significant effect on the colour with timber from younger trees often being lighter in colour than more mature trees.

When choosing a timber species you therefore need to consider the following:

- Are you looking for a timber species or a timber colour? If you are more concerned with colour then ensure that you are accepting of the colour variations that may occur in that species. You may also wish to consider another similar coloured species or whether mixed species of similar colour are available that would be more suited to the look you are seeking.
- Photos in magazines or off computer screens will NOT give you a realistic representation of species colour. Even a sample flooring board provides just one representation of the colour in that species. Due to this, larger panels in showrooms should be viewed although even these are unlikely to be able to cover the full range of potential colour variation.
- If you like the colours in a species from one supplier, should you expect that the colours in that species will be the same from another supplier? No, there is no assurance that this will be the case due to differences in growing region and tree age.

It is important to remember that when choosing a timber floor, no matter how large the showroom sample is that you have seen, it is only indicative of the species colour and natural variation that may be expected. Your floor will be different from these samples and totally unique to you in its beauty.

G r a d e

The choice of grade influences the character of a floor.

Grading rules do not cover either colour or colour variation, but do significantly influence the appearance of timber, with some grades including more of the character of the trees history with larger gum veins, knots and other features present. In other grades, the cleaner natural lines and figure of the timber will dominate with fewer and smaller features present. When deciding on a timber grade ensure that you consider the following:

- All trees contain features such as gum veins, knots and past borer activity and such features for many, add to the character and charm of their floor. Therefore when choosing a grade you are simply deciding on how much feature you desire.
- The grade has no influence on a floor's fitness for purpose in terms of its manufactured moisture content range or machining tolerance. These aspects are the same for each grade.
- All grades permit some feature and even though it may be named 'Select Grade' some gum veins, knots and past borer activity is permitted.
- How the boards are mixed into the floor both in terms of colour and feature is up to the installer, so if you have any specific views on this, you should discuss it with your installer prior to installation.
- Because different features tend to dominate different species, two floors of the same grade may appear quite different.
- There are grade names associated with Australian Standards grading rules. In other instances, flooring manufacturers may have their own grades and grade names. A manufacturer's grade of timber may not be exactly the same as that in an Australian Standard.

It is therefore important to realize that the overall colour or blend of colour in a floor is dependent on the species or species mix chosen and the character of the floor, in terms of the features present, such as gum veins, is determined by the grade.

If choosing an alternative species from the one originally considered, not only will the overall colour differ but the dominant type of feature may also change. It is important to work closely with your supplier and installer so that they are absolutely clear about the look that you desire.