

# WHAT DOES “GREEN” MEAN?

## COMPOSITE VS. NATURAL REAL WOOD DECKING

When it comes to decking what does green really mean.....In the construction world being “green” or using “green” building materials is particularly appealing to conscientious consumers. What does that really mean, there are many different definitions of what the term “green” means, but no agreed upon uniform standard. When deciding what “green” means consider several factors:

- ❖ **Sustainability** - Are the resources used in fabricating the product renewable?
- ❖ **Environmental Impact** - What environmental damage is done gathering raw materials and fabricating the product?
- ❖ **Embodied Energy** - How much energy is needed to produce and transport the product? How heavy is it, and how far does it have to travel?
- ❖ **Lifespan** - How durable is the product?
- ❖ **Deconstruction and Afterlife** - What happens to the material when it is worn out? Can it be recycled, or does it end up in a landfill forever?

Starting with sustainability and environmental impact – harvesting of natural lumber for decking comes primarily from plantations or managed forests and is highly sustainable. Due to stricter logging rules the effects of logging are minimized. The main ingredient in composite decking is petroleum which is derived from oil drilling a process that damages vegetation, pollutes water and soil while leaving holes that scar the earth. When comparing embodied energy most exotic decking must be shipped several thousand miles and contains a fair amount of embodied energy. Although composite decking does not require the long range shipping factor it does; however, contain a fair amount of embodied

energy itself due to the process used to harvest the petroleum products. When we are talking about lifespan composite decking is expected to last decades, although it hasn't been around the decking industry long enough to document the longevity. Exotic hardwood decking can be expected to last well over 25 years. In example IPE was used on the Atlantic Boardwalk well over 25 years ago and is in beautiful shape wearing very well even under the excessive foot traffic and harsher conditions than a normal application would endure. Deconstruction and afterlife should be the final consideration when weighing the evidence. The naturally rot resistant wood species used in decking can be recycled and at the worst eventually will revert back to soil. Many composite decking materials may start out with a high recycled content; however, at the end of their lifespan they are not able to be recycled due to the inability to readily separate the components that make up the composite and are destined to become debris filling our landfills.

Again what does "green" really mean. When considering what "green" means to each of us there are many factors to be considered in evaluating the different decking materials. Once all information is processed the natural, truly "green" choice that will become apparent will be Exotic Hardwood decking ~ Naturally resistant to decay, insects and fire damage~ Maintenance free, will gradually change to a beautiful silver patina (Original color may be maintained with UV protectant application)

COMPARE FOR YOURSELF (Linear Foot Pricing):

	<u>IPE</u>	<u>BANGKIRAI</u>	<u>TIGER DECKING</u>	<u>TREX</u>	<u>TIMBER TECH</u>
<b>1X4</b>	\$2.45	\$1.35	\$1.69	N/A	N/A
<b>1X6</b>	\$3.15	\$2.20	\$2.59	\$2.49	\$3.29
<b>5/4X6</b>	\$4.40	N/A	\$3.69	*N/A	\$4.69

\*5/4X5 Profile Grooved