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# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

## Black Label™ vs competitive brands or generic decking and cladding.

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Black Label™ is committed to protecting our customers from an unregulated market where misrepresentations of product quality, common names, and generalization of trade names and species have become common practices.

To avoid causing our customers any species confusion, all products sold under the Black Label™ trademark are independently inspected, graded, selected, certified, and warranted to the specific grade specified and defined under our Tropical Forest Products Grading Rules. These certificates of compliance are available upon request.

As an example, consider Black Label™ Ipe...

The U.S. Forest Products Laboratory and the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory specifically identify the Lapacho Group of *Tabebuia* as highly resistant to deterioration from rot, termites, and marine borers. The Lapacho Group of subspecies can be visually identified by the presence of lapachols (a yellowish powder) in the wood cells, which can be seen when cross-cutting the timber. As for any of the particular subspecies that make up the Lapacho Group, the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory has concluded that these subspecies can only be identified microscopically, not visually. So, any claims that specific subspecies of *Tabebuia* are chosen for their color or some other quality within the Lapacho Group would be false.

A lack of specifically defined grading rules allows the mills to produce lumber with defects that can directly affect the performance and appearance of these materials. This has led to the experience of inconsistency within the Ipe market.

Generic "Ipe" is generally imported under the loose grade term of FAS (first and seconds) or various trademarks representing no specific species or grading rules. These products may include non-durable sapwood, borer holes, knots, shake, and other milling defects.

The Black Label™ Premium Select Architectural Grade is hand selected to be defect-free on all four faces and edges.

This is the highest grade in the industry. Grading rules are available upon request.

We support the efforts of consumers to protect themselves by requesting specific species, grades, and quality standards for the wood products they purchase. If a supplier doesn't give this kind of information, it's a strong sign that the customer might not be getting the product they thought they were paying for.

Clarity creates accountability. The more you know, the better we look.