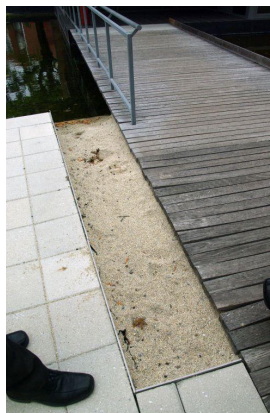

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Black Locust

The question often arises: Is Black Locust a comparable substitute for Tropical Hardwood Decking or Lumber?

According to the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory, Black Locust is highly durable and resistant to termites, similar to Ipe, Garapa, and Cumaru. However, this is where the similarities end. Black Locust trees are neither particularly tall nor straight, resulting in shorter lumber with many natural defects. In contrast, tropical species offer long, nearly defect-free lengths. Black Locust is known for being high in defects and dimensionally unstable, with a tendency to warp and twist. Historically, it has been used primarily for fence posts, railroad ties, and heavy-dimensional applications where appearance is less critical and movement is less likely.

Test strips on boardwalks in New York and New Jersey have shown Black Locust's poor performance. A 2007 Test Strip Report from the City Engineers Office in Ocean City, New Jersey, after a two-year evaluation, stated: "Inconsistent deflection from board to board creates potential trip hazards. Product does not appear to perform better than southern yellow pine and as a hardwood should perform closer to a tropical hardwood." Due to its low quality, dimensional instability, and sourcing difficulties, using Black Locust for decking, handrails, or site amenities is impractical. A 2014 memo from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did not recommend Black Locust for boardwalk reconstruction after Hurricane Sandy.



Mayor Ernest Troiano Jr. mentioned that Wildwood turned to Ipe and Cumaru wood because a shipment of domestically grown Black Locust arrived in an unusable condition.