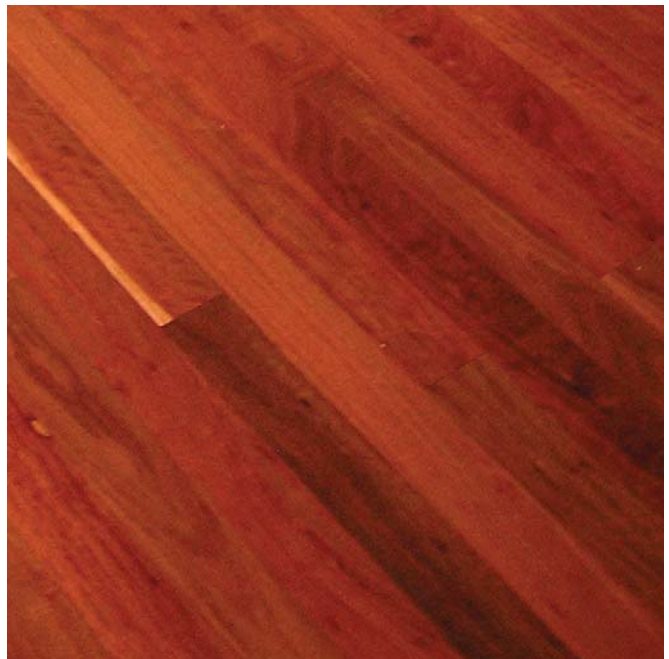


The choice of species influences the colour of a floor

There are many timber species used in timber floors which provide us with a rich array of colours and grain patterns. In some species the natural colours will be fairly consistent while in others there can be blend of many colours and tones. This is particularly so where the sapwood (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 also occur. In addition to this the age of the tree also has a significant effect on the colour. Timber from younger trees often being lighter in colour than more mature trees. When choosing a timber species ensure that you 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 consider whether there is another similar coloured species or whether mixed species of similar colour are available that would be more suited to what you are looking for.
- You need to realize that photos in magazines or off computer screens are NOT going to 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 and even these cannot cover the full range of colour variations.
- 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.



A blend of colours showing light pink sapwood to reds and red-browns in the heartwood.

It is important that when choosing a timber floor to remember that 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.

The choice of grade influences the character of a floor

It is important to realize that grading rules do not cover either colour or colour variation, but do significantly influence the appearance, 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 dominant 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 that 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 etc. 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.
- There are grade names associated with Australian Standards grading rules and in other instances flooring manufacturers may have their own grades and grade names. A manufacturer's grade will not be exactly the same as that in an Australian Standard.
- 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 view on this, you should discuss it with your installer.
- Also of importance is that different features can predominate in different species. Therefore, two floors of the same grade may appear quite different in terms of the predominating feature and how dominant that feature appears in a floor.



Select Grade - Blackbutt

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 that 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 predominating type of feature may also change. It is important to work closely with your supplier and installer so that they can be clear about the look that you desire.