

You've Got Questions?

We've got answers.



Q. What is the difference between a laminate, solid hardwood and an engineered hardwood floor?

A1. **Laminate:** core of product is typically made of High Density Fiber (HDF). The top layer is a photographic layer that should appear identical to the product it replicates, be it wood, vinyl, tile, etc. The product is generally 3/8" thick and is a floating install with tongue and groove glue less locking system, which allows you to install and uninstall the floor several times if desired. This product is typically the least expensive.

A2. **Solid Hardwood:** the product is the solid natural wood species throughout the entire piece of flooring, typically with a tongue and groove installation. Good sanding and refinishing capabilities. The product is typically more expensive and has some limitations as to where it can be installed due to moisture issues.

A3. **Engineered Hardwood:** is a product made up of a core of hardwood, plywood or HDF and a top layer of hardwood veneer that is glued on the top surface of the core and is available in almost any hardwood species. The product thus has the natural characteristics of the selected wood species as opposed to a photographic layer. The "engineered" product has been designed to provide greater stability, particularly where moisture or heat pose problems for solid hardwood floors.

Q. What does greater stability mean?

A. The instability of solid hardwood is usually moisture or heat related. Under adverse conditions, solid hardwood floors can warp, cup, swell or split apart. Engineered hardwood flooring overcomes these problems by constructing a multiple-ply plank that counteracts twisting and remains flat and intact. This makes engineered hardwood flooring a better choice for installation over radiant heat sources; over concrete whether it's below grade or above, and in rainy climates.

Q. What is the Janka hardness test and why should I be aware of it as a consumer?

A. As a consumer of quality wood flooring, you naturally want to know how the product you are thinking about purchasing will withstand wearing and dents. The Janka hardness rating is your standard measurement for this purpose. The Janka test is conducted by measuring the force needed to lodge a .444-inch steel ball in the wood species to a depth of half the ball's diameter. The higher the rating, the harder is the species of wood. Of course, the Janka hardness rating is also useful when assessing how easy or difficult it is to hammer a nail into the hardwood or cut it with a saw.

Q. Is there a benchmark for comparing the relative hardness of other wood?

A. Red Oak is a very popular, durable species of wood. It has a Janka rating of 1290 and serves as a benchmark for comparing the relative hardness of other wood species.

Q. Is the Janka rating useful for engineered hardwood flooring?

A. The Janka rating is a good one to keep in mind for engineered hardwood flooring as well as solid hardwood, especially if durability is a key selling feature for you. The Janka hardness rating of the hardwood used for the veneer on your engineered flooring will guide you to the best choice for your intended flooring use. Vanier Hard Maple, Brazilian Cherry and Hand-scraped Oak, Red Oak, and Black-Stained White Oak are all excellent engineered floors for high traffic areas.

