

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Choosing Materials To Make The Most Of Your Time And Budget

(NAPSA)—When it comes to outdoor wooden structures, such as decks, gazebos, sheds and fences, a successful do-it-yourself project begins with choosing the right building materials.

To know what materials you should choose, ask yourself the following questions:

- How much do I want to spend?

The cost of construction varies depending on the type of materials used.

For example, composite lumber can cost twice as much as treated wood. Also, the fasteners required for outdoor use tend to cost more than fasteners for indoor use. These costs should be factored into your budget.

- How long do I plan to use my final product?

Choose your building materials based on how you plan to use your project and how long you want it to last.

Many structures, such as decks, are built for long-term use. The manufacturer's warranty can offer a clue for how long to expect building materials to perform.

For example, Ecolife™, a new organically stabilized and preserved treated wood product, offers improved weathering performance compared to traditional treated wood. The product also comes with a limited lifetime warranty, while warranties for composite lumber typically cover only 10 years.

- How can I be sure that my building materials will stand the test of time?



The newest varieties of organically stabilized treated wood, such as Ecolife, offer improved weathering performance.

To be sure your materials will last, look for materials inspected or certified by a third party.

The American Lumber Standard Committee accredits agencies that inspect treated wood, ensuring that the wood meets industry standards.

Inspected treated wood is marked or tagged with information such as the name of the company that treated it, exposure category, preservative used and year of treatment.

- What kind of maintenance will this project require once it is finished?

All outdoor structures require maintenance. However, new advancements in technology make it possible for natural materials such as treated wood to now offer improved long-term performance

against the effects of weathering, making them, in effect, lower maintenance.

New stabilized wood products significantly reduce cracking, warping and splintering, and, because new formulations such as Ecolife contain no metals, they are no more corrosive to fasteners than untreated wood.

Keep in mind, though, that to sustain the beauty and life of your treated lumber or composite building materials, low maintenance does not mean “no maintenance.” Both types of materials will require some maintenance and will need to be cleaned and possibly sealed, stained and/or painted.

Composite building materials may require specialty sealants, paints and cleaners that are designed for use specifically with these materials.

No matter the materials used, all outdoor structures must be checked annually for signs of distress and maintained appropriately. If not, warranties for your building materials may be void.

For more information on choosing the right building materials, visit your home-products retailer.

Internet sites such as www.treatedwood.com are also a good place to research a project and find answers to your questions about building materials.

Finally, check and follow your local building codes when adding a new structure, as this can impact the warranties on your building materials.