

# **TIPS FOR HOMEOWNERS**

## **The Bottom Line On Engineered Floors**

(NAPSA)—Even flooring can be misunderstood. For example, engineered hardwood floors, sometimes known as wood laminate floors, are a greatly misunderstood flooring product.

Part of that confusion stems from the introduction of plastic laminate floors from Europe, and part of the confusion lies with the construction industry, which uses the terms “engineered wood” and “plywood” almost interchangeable,

But engineered hardwood floors aren’t made with plastic, and they’re not simply chunks of wood glued together. Engineered hardwood floors are a highly developed, durable alternative to solid hardwood floors, and they have many benefits over their more well-known cousins.

According to the experts, engineered hardwood floors usually consist of three or more layers of wood glued together under tremendous heat and pressure. The top layer is then stained and finished with a durable top coat. Some engineered floors are also treated with a distressing process to make the finished installation resemble antique flooring.

“Many people don’t realize that engineered floors are very durable and more stable than solid hardwood flooring,” says Randal Weeks, product manager for Bruce Hardwood Floors. “For rooms that take a lot of wear and tear, or for basement applications, an engineered floor might be the best option for many families.”

Because of the way in which engineered floors are manufactured, they can be made of many types of hardwoods that would otherwise be too expensive for most consumers.

Engineered floors are often made from oak, or specialty hardwood species such as cherry, walnut, or maple.



**Experts say engineered hardwood floors are a durable alternative to solid hardwood floors.**

“Engineered floors allow a wider variety of consumers to be able to afford the sumptuous look of hardwood in their homes,” says Weeks. “Because hardwoods in general are very durable and carry long warranties, they are in the long run a very economical choice for consumers.”

Weeks recommends studying the warranty and grading of engineered floors carefully before deciding on a purchase. Hardwood floors are graded according to natural grain characteristics including pin knots, mineral streaks, small closed knots, and natural color variation. Face grades range from Select (the fewest natural character marks) Better, and Standard, all the way down to Tavern, Cabin, Thrift, and Bargain (moderate to heavy natural character marks).

It is important to remember that many manufacturer’s warranties do not apply to the lower grades of flooring while Select, Better and Standard graded floors can carry a finish warranty of up to 25 years and a lifetime structural integrity warranty.

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*Editor’s Note: This article is the fourth in a series.*