



## Grade Guidelines





THE  
**Original**  
PREFINISHED  
WOOD FLOORING

Proudly made in North America

Mercier is the pioneer in manufacturing prefinished wood flooring.

Our goal, which stemmed from a visionary and practical need to eliminate on-site finishing of wood floors, was the springboard to our culture of innovation. Dust from sanding, drying times and emissions in the home are now inconveniences of the past thanks to the bold, creative drive that transformed the industry over four decades ago.

It is thanks to this culture of innovation, which permeates throughout everything Mercier does, that we have developed a renowned mastery of wood itself, the science of surface finishing, and wood flooring design. Mercier's relentless pursuit to offer the very best of wood and our uncompromising reverence for it—from its inherent properties, nobility and authenticity—is what has enabled us to carve an enviable legacy that can never be equalled.

**There can only be one original. Mercier.**



# Important notice

Mercier's mission is to walk consumers through the process of choosing a new floor. In this Grade Guidelines, you'll find all the characteristics of each grade and species of wood in the Mercier product line.

*Note that the images appearing in this guide are for illustrative purposes only. A printed brochure can never accurately reproduce all the variations and subtleties of wood colors and textures, so please always refer to natural samples.*

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# Grade selection

**The grade classifies the wood boards based on their appearance.** As each board is unique, we group them according to the color variations and character marks that determine the appearance of your floor.

If you prefer a clean, uniform appearance with little variation and very few character marks, you will most likely opt for the Select & Better grade. If you prefer pronounced color variations, the Authentic grade will definitely be your first choice. If moderate variations are more to your taste, the Distinction grade will be your best option.



*It should be noted that a product of the same grade and species may have more important character marks in size and number according to the increase of its width.*

# Red Oak

## Grain and color

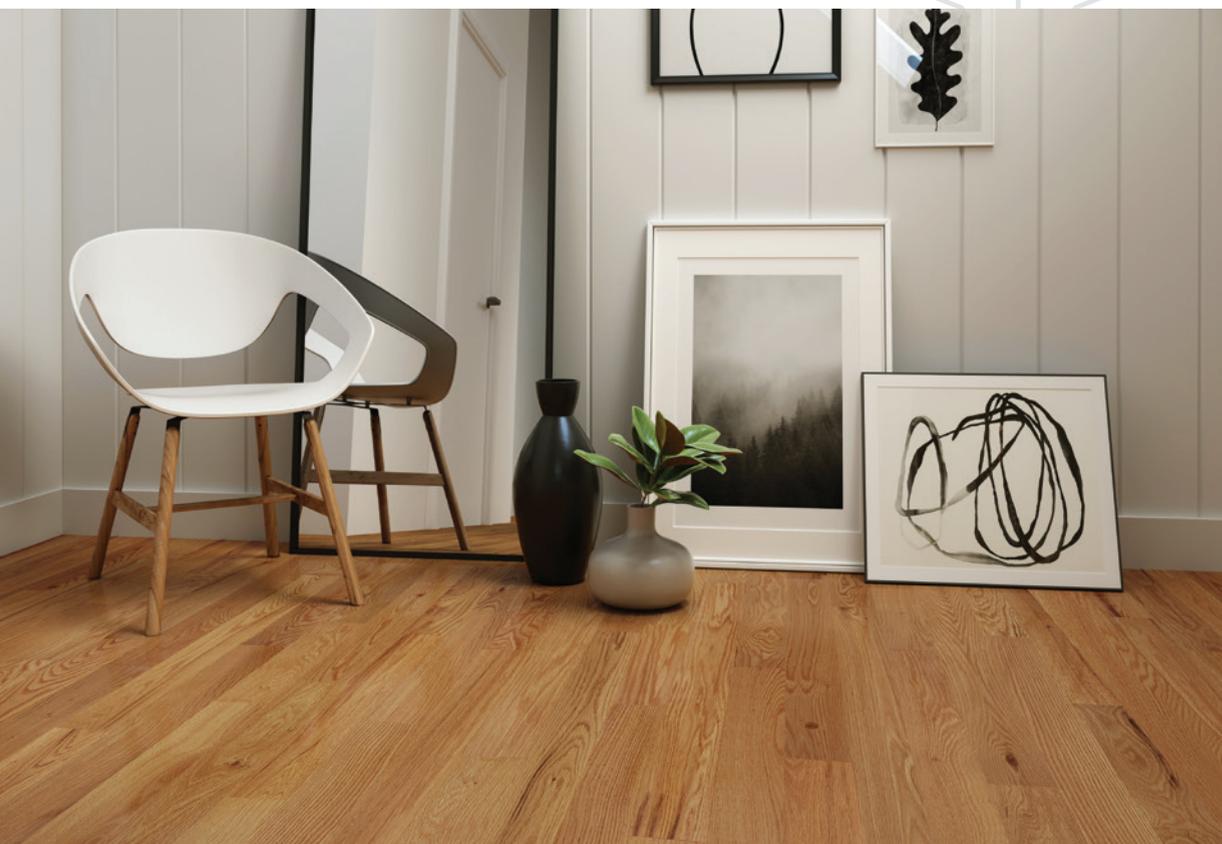
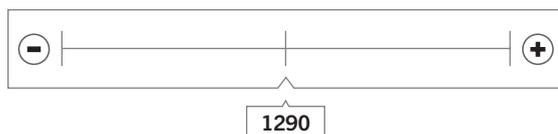
Red Oak is an open grain, ring-porous species that's characterized by visible, well defined growth rings. Tones range from pinkish beige to reddish brown.

## Wood oxidation

Red Oak moderately changes color over time, acquiring a slightly amber hue.



## Janka hardness



Red Oak

# Select & Better

Light, even appearance with slight color variations between boards. This grade showcases the sapwood's natural tones, from pinkish beige to light brown. Pronounced contrasts in the same board are not allowed in this grade.



## Knots

Sound pin knots are accepted.  
Limited in number.



## Streaks

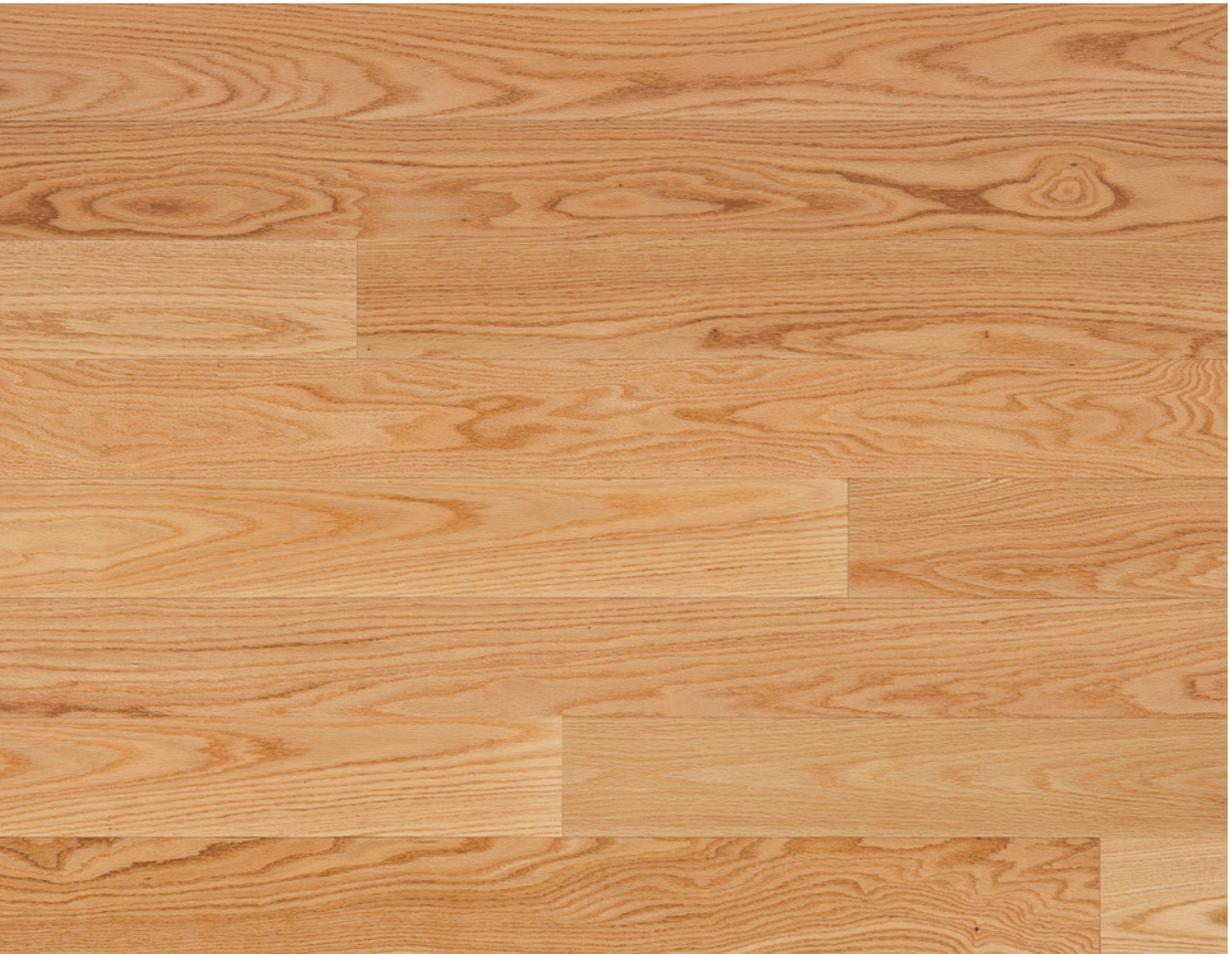
Small mineral streaks are accepted.  
Limited in number.

## Splits and checks

Splits and checks are not accepted.

## Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 12" (305 mm).



Red Oak

# Distinction

This grade's rich appearance and moderate contrasts are the result of a balanced selection of the species' natural tones, ranging from pinkish beige to medium brown. Light to moderate variation between boards.



## Knots

Small sounds and repaired knots are accepted.  
Limited in number and diameter.



## Streaks

Small mineral streaks of any length are allowed.  
Limited in number.

## Splits and checks

Splits are not accepted in this grade.  
Occasional surface checks are accepted.

## Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 12" (305 mm).



Red Oak

# PRO

The contrasting appearance of this grade represents a mix of the species' natural full-bodied tones. Moderate variation between boards.



## Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty are accepted without limitation. Openings in and around knots are accepted.



## Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

## Other characteristics

Occasional sticker stains are accepted.

## Splits and checks

Occasional surface checks and occasional end splits are accepted in this grade.

## Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 12" (305 mm).



Red Oak

# Authentic

The contrasting appearance of this grade represents a mix of the species' natural full-bodied tones. Moderate to pronounced variation between boards.



## ➤ Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty (including slight openings or depressions) are accepted without limitation. Small openings in and around knots are accepted.



## ➤ Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

## Other characteristics

Varnish cracks around character marks are accepted.

## Splits and checks

Surface splits and checks and end splits are accepted.

## Length\*

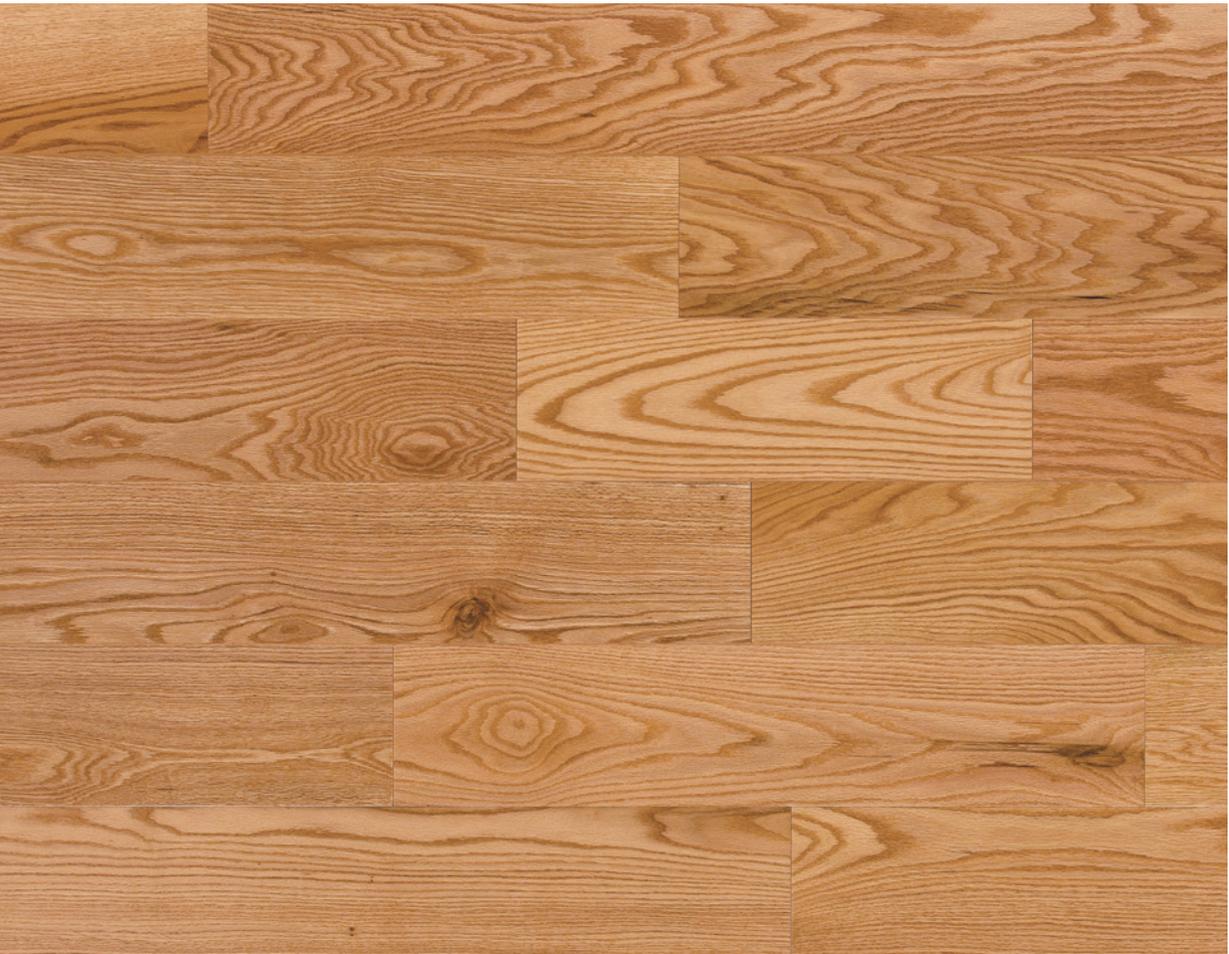
Random lengths.

Minimum:

6 1/2": 16" (406 mm)

8 1/8": 18" (457 mm)

*\* May occasionally include 12" (305 mm) boards.*



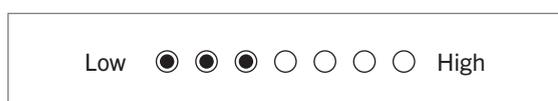
# Hard Maple

## Grain and color

Hard Maple has a fine and even-textured grain. Growth rings are narrow and lightly contrasted. Color variations range from the sapwood's whitish beige to a full-bodied brown, making it the lightest-toned hardwood species.

## Wood oxidation

Hard Maple undergoes a moderate change in color over time, acquiring a golden hue.



## Janka hardness



Hard Maple

# Select & Better

Light, even appearance, with slight color variations between boards. This grade showcases the sapwood's natural tones, ranging from creamy white to very light brown. Pronounced contrasts within a single board are not allowed in this grade.



## Knots

Sound pin knots are accepted.  
Limited in number.

## Splits and checks

Splits and checks are not accepted.

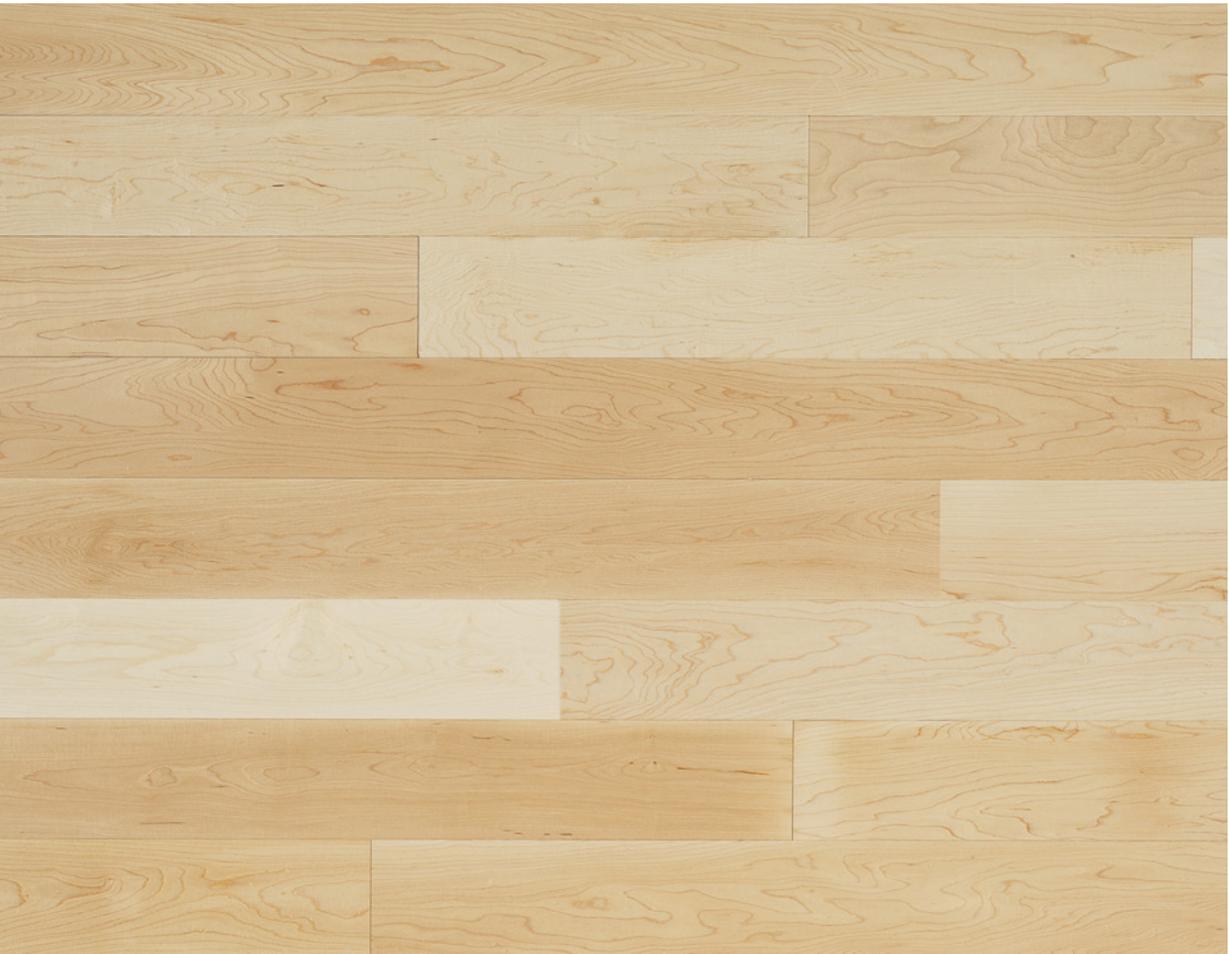
## Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 12" (305 mm).



## Streaks

Small mineral streaks are accepted.  
Limited in number.



## Hard Maple

# Distinction

This grade's rich, moderately contrasted appearance is the result of a balanced selection of the species' natural tones, ranging from creamy white to medium brown. Light to moderate variation between boards.



### Knots

Small sound and repaired knots are accepted.  
Limited in number and diameter.



### Streaks

Small mineral streaks of any length are allowed.  
Limited in number.

### Splits and checks

Splits are not accepted in this grade.  
Occasional surface checks are accepted.

### Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 12" (305 mm).



## Hard Maple

# PRO

The contrasting appearance of this grade represents a mix of the species' natural full-bodied tones. Moderate variation between boards.



### Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty are accepted without limitation. Small openings in and around knots are accepted.



### Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

### Other characteristics

Occasional sticker stains are accepted.

### Splits and checks

Occasional surface checks and occasional end splits are accepted in this grade.

### Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 12" (305 mm).



Hard Maple

# Authentic

This grade is high in contrasts, reflecting the full range of vivid natural tones found in the species. Moderate to pronounced variation between boards.



## Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty (including slight openings or depressions) are accepted without limitation. Openings in and around knots are accepted.



## Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

## Other characteristics

Varnish cracks around character marks are accepted in this grade.

## Splits and checks

Surface splits and checks and end splits are accepted in this grade.

## Length\*

Random lengths.

Minimum:

6 1/2": 16" (406 mm)

8 1/8": 18" (457 mm)

*\* May occasionally include 12" (305 mm) boards.*





## White Oak

# Distinction

This grade's rich, moderately contrasting appearance is the result of a balanced mix of all the species' natural tones, from creamy beige to vivid brown. Moderate variation between boards.



### Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty (including slight openings or depressions) are accepted without limitation. Openings in and around knots are accepted.



### Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

### Other characteristics

Varnish cracks around character marks are accepted in this grade.

### Splits and checks

Surface splits and checks and end splits are accepted in this grade.

### Length

Random lengths.

Minimum:

7 1/2" : 24" (609,6 mm)



## White Oak

# Authentic

This grade's rich, moderately contrasting appearance is the result of a balanced mix of all the species' natural tones, from creamy beige to vivid brown. Moderate variation between boards.



### Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty (including slight openings or depressions) are accepted without limitation. Openings in and around knots are accepted.



### Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

### Other characteristics\*

Varnish cracks around character marks are accepted in this grade.

*\*For 6 1/2" and 8 1/8" boards only*

### Splits and checks

Surface splits and checks and end splits are accepted in this grade.

### Length\*

Random lengths. Minimum:

2 1/4", 3 1/4", 4 1/4"

and 5": 12" (305 mm)

6 1/2": 16" (406 mm)

7 1/2": 24" (609,6 mm)

8 1/8": 18" (457 mm)

*\* May occasionally include 12" (305 mm) boards.*



White Oak

# R&Q (rift and quarter sawn)

Uniform and with moderate contrasts, the R&Q grade features a linear single grain, which is distinctive to quarter sawn wood. The coloration is a balanced blend, ranging from cream to golden brown, Light to moderate variation between boards.



## Knots

Sound knots and knots repaired with wood putty are accepted in limited amounts. Limited in number.



## Streaks

Mineral streaks of any length are allowed.

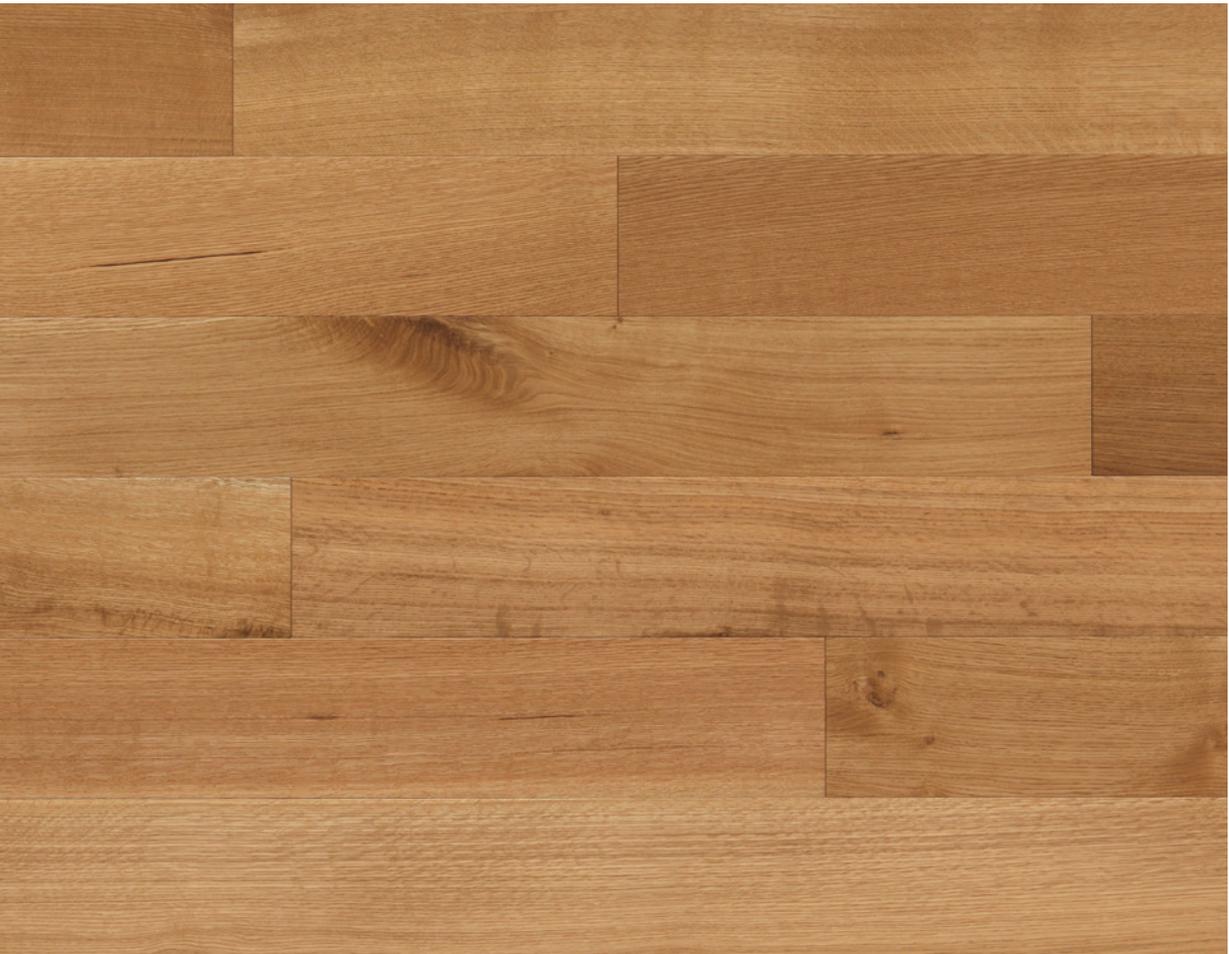
## Splits and checks

Splits are not accepted in this grade. Occasional surface checks are accepted.

## Length\*

Random lengths.  
Minimum 16" (406 mm)

*\* May occasionally include 12" (305 mm) boards.*



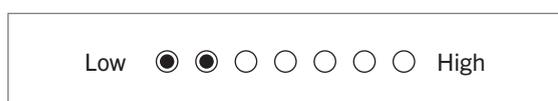
# Hickory

## Grain and color

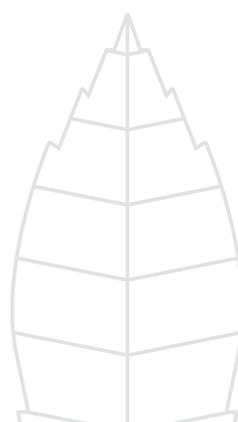
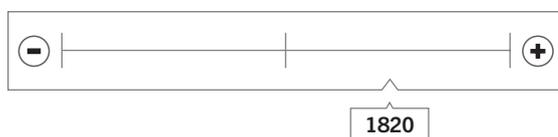
Hickory is a dense, closed-grain wood with visible growth rings. Its color is characterized by a wide range of tones and variations, from golden beige to an intense blackish brown. Prominent character marks give it a rustic, natural look.

## Wood oxidation

Hickory undergoes a slight change in color over time, acquiring a golden hue.



## Janka hardness



Hickory

# Authentic

This grade is high in tonal contrasts, showcasing the full range of vivid natural colors found in the species. Pronounced variation between boards.



## Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty (including slight openings or depressions) are accepted without limitation. Openings in and around knots are accepted.



## Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

## Other characteristics

Varnish cracks around character marks are accepted in this grade.

## Splits and checks

Surface splits and checks and end splits are accepted in this grade.

## Length

Random lengths.

Minimum:

2 1/4", 3 1/4", 4 1/4"

and 5": 12" (305 mm)

\*6 12": 16" (406 mm)

*\* May occasionally include 12" (305 mm) boards.*



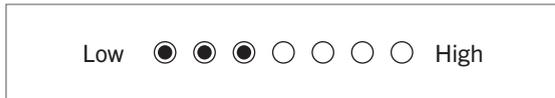
# White Ash

## Grain and color

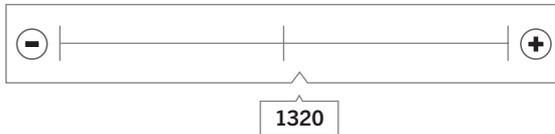
White Ash is ring porous, with visible, well-defined growth rings. Its rich spectrum of colors ranges from creamy white with golden undertones to an intense dark brown.

## Wood oxidation

White Ash undergoes a moderate change in color over time, acquiring an amber hue.



## Janka hardness



## White Ash

# Distinction

This grade's rich, high-contrast appearance showcases the species' full range of natural tones, from creamy white to dark brown. Moderate to pronounced variation between boards.



### Knots

Sounds and repaired knots are accepted.  
Limited in number and diameter.



### Streaks

Small mineral streaks of any length are allowed.  
Limited in number.

### Splits and checks

Splits are not accepted in this grade.  
Occasional surface checks are accepted.

### Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 12" (305 mm).



White Ash

# Authentic

The rich and contrasting appearance of this grade represents a mix of the species' natural full-bodied tones, ranging from creamy white to dark brown. Moderate to pronounced variation between boards.



## Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty (including slight openings or depressions) are accepted without limitation. Openings in and around knots are accepted.



## Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

## Other characteristics

Varnish cracks around character marks are accepted in this grade.

## Splits and checks

Surface splits and checks and end splits are accepted in this grade.

## Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 16" (406 mm).



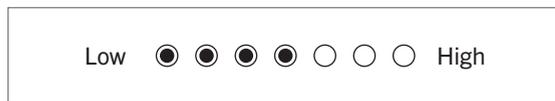
# Yellow Birch

## Grain and color

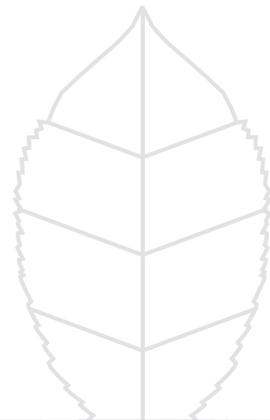
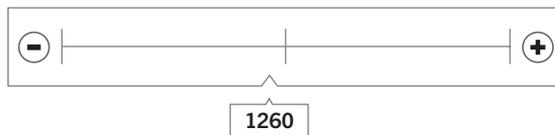
Yellow Birch is straight grained and even textured, with fine, lightly contrasting growth rings. Colors range from the creamy, sometimes pinkish white of the sapwood to an intense reddish brown.

## Wood oxidation

Yellow Birch undergoes a moderate change in color over time, acquiring a slightly amber hue.



## Janka hardness



## Yellow Birch

# Distinction

This grade's rich, high-contrast appearance showcases the species' full range of natural tones, from creamy beige to reddish brown. Moderate to pronounced variation between boards.



### Knots

Small sound knots and repaired knots are accepted.  
Limited in number and diameter..

### Splits and checks

Splits are not accepted in this grade.  
Occasional surface checks are accepted.

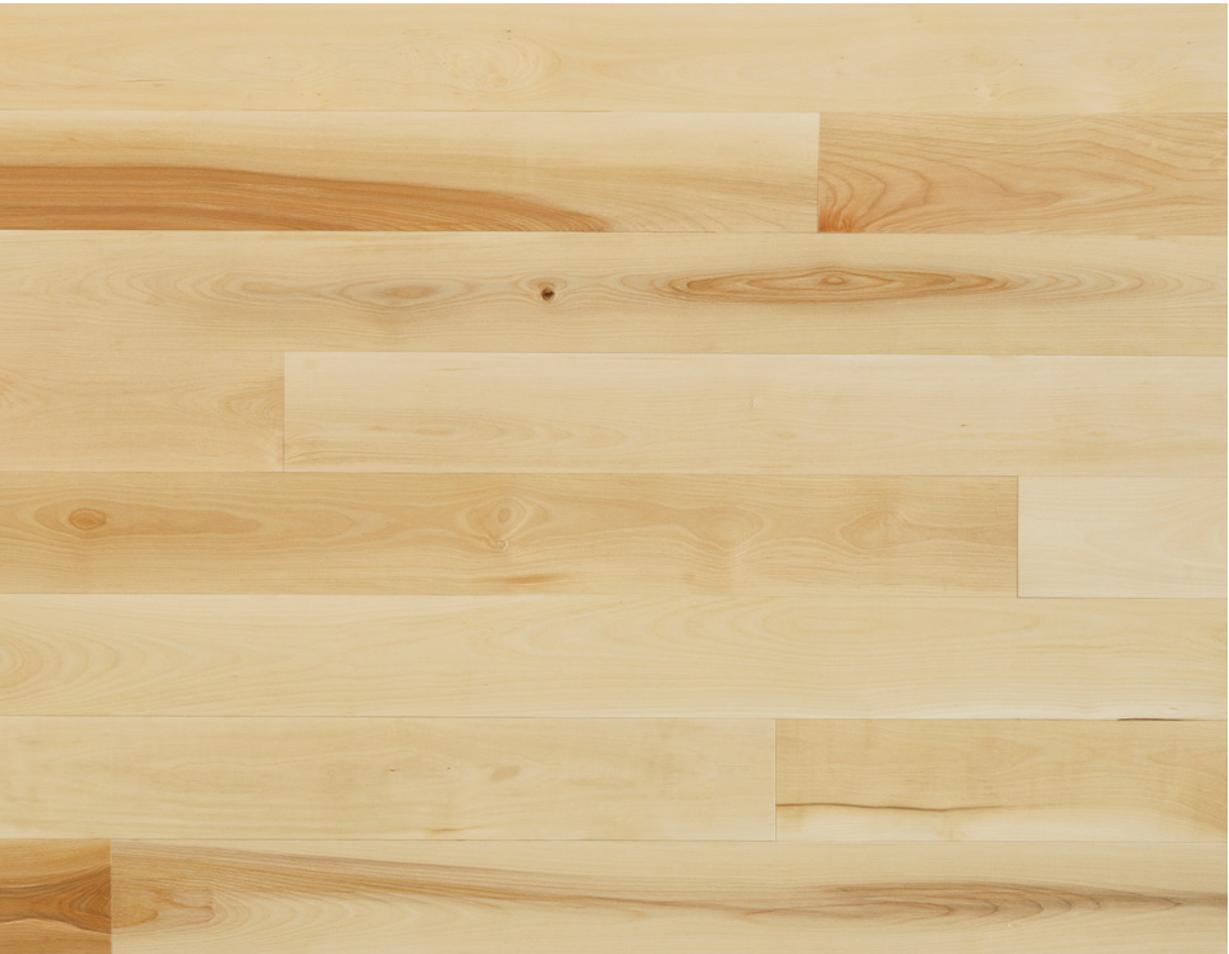


### Streaks

Small mineral streaks of any length are allowed.  
Limited in number.

### Length

Random lengths.  
Minimum 12" (305 mm).



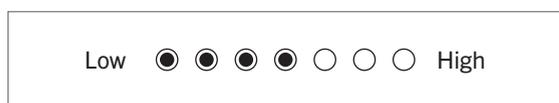
# American Walnut

## Grain and color

American Walnut has a fine, straight grain. It's characterized by uncommonly deep, rich colors ranging from beige to almost white in the sapwood and light to chocolate brown in the heartwood.

## Wood oxidation

Walnut undergoes a moderate change in color over time, turning a lighter, more even golden brown.



## Janka hardness



## American Walnut

# Authentic

This grade's rich appearance and moderate contrasts reflect the species' wide range of natural colors, from the beige of the sapwood to chocolate brown. Pronounced variation between boards.



### ➤ Knots

Sound knots and knots filled with wood putty (including slight openings or depressions) are accepted without limitation. Openings in and around knots are accepted.



### ➤ Streaks

Mineral streaks are accepted without limitation.

### Other characteristics

Varnish cracks around character marks are accepted in this grade. The beige coloration of the sapwood is allowed without limitation.

### Splits and checks

Surface splits and checks and end splits are accepted in this grade. Splits filled with wood putty are accepted.

### Length\*

Random lengths.  
Minimum 16" (406 mm).

*\* May occasionally include 12" (305 mm) boards.*



# Hardwood floor platforms



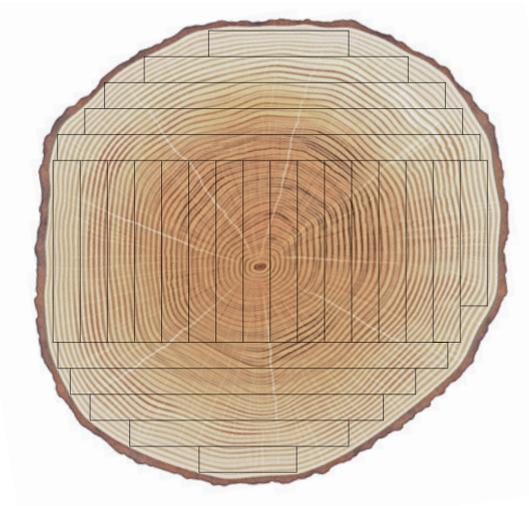
## SOLID (SOLID WOOD)

## ENGINEERED (ENGINEERED WOOD)

	SOLID (SOLID WOOD)	ENGINEERED (ENGINEERED WOOD)
<b>NATURE OF MATERIAL</b>	100% HARDWOOD	TOP LAYER: HARDWOOD BASE: HARDWOOD PLYWOOD
<b>SPECIAL FEATURES OF MATERIAL</b>	100% SOLID WOOD NATURAL CHARM	UNBEATABLE STABILITY SUITABLE FOR ALL SURFACES
<b>TYPES OF INSTALLATIONS</b>	NAILED AND STAPLED	NAILED, GLUED, STAPLED*, AND FLOATING
<b>INSTALLATION IN THE BASEMENT OR ON CONCRETE</b>	NOT RECOMMENDED	POSSIBLE
<b>SANDING</b>	YES: FROM 3 TO 5 TIMES	YES: FROM 3 TO 5 TIMES
<b>SPECIES</b>	HARD MAPLE HICKORY RED OAK WHITE ASH WHITE OAK YELLOW BIRCH	AMERICAN WALNUT HARD MAPLE HICKORY RED OAK WHITE ASH WHITE OAK
<b>GRADE (ACCORDING TO THE SPECIES)</b>	SELECT & BETTER, DISTINCTION, PRO, AUTHENTIC	SELECT & BETTER, DISTINCTION, PRO AUTHENTIC, R&Q
<b>THICKNESS AND WIDTH (ACCORDING TO THE SPECIES)</b>	2 ¼" (57 MM) X ¾" (19 MM) 3 ¼" (83 MM) X ¾" (19 MM) 4 ¼" (108 MM) X ¾" (19 MM)	5" (127 MM) X ½" (12,7 MM) 5" (127 MM) X ¾" (19 MM) 6 ½" (165 MM) X ½" (12,7 MM) 6 ½" (165 MM) X ¾" (19 MM) 7 ½" (190.5 MM) X ½" (12,7 MM) 7 ½" (190.5 MM) X ¾" (19 MM) 8 ½" (206 MM) X ¾" (19 MM)
<b>LENGTH</b>	RANDOM	RANDOM
<b>HERRINGBONE AVAILABILITY</b> (Suitable for a Herringbone pattern installation only)	NOT AVAILABLE	5" (127 MM) X ½" (12,7 MM) FIXED LENGTHS: 18" (45,7 CM) HARD MAPLE RED OAK WHITE OAK

\* REFER TO TECHNICAL BULLETIN # 9

# Types of cuts



## Flat sawn

The most common sawing method. It results in a wide variety of colors, with straight and curved patterns, so that each board sawn this way has a unique appearance.



## Quarter and rift sawn

A sawing method in which the annual growth rings form a  $45^\circ$  or  $90^\circ$  angle with the surface of the board. This creates a straight-line pattern along the length of the board. When the angle is close to  $90^\circ$ , the result is the wavy perpendicular patterns characteristic of R&Q (rift and quarter sawn) boards.

# Glossary

**1 Sapwood:** The part of the tree located near the outside of the trunk, between the heartwood (duramen) and the bark. It is usually of a lighter color than the heartwood.

**2 Heartwood:** The part of the tree between the pith and the sapwood. It is usually darker than the sapwood.

**3 Hardwood:** Generally, one of the botanical groups of deciduous trees that have broad leaves in contrast to the conifers of softwoods. The terms have no reference to the actual hardness of the wood.

**4 Annual growth ring:** The layer of wood growth, including spring and summerwood, formed on a tree during a single growing season

**5 Janka hardness:** A hardness test measuring the force required to drive a 0.444" (11.3 mm) steel bearing half its depth into the wood. The more force required, the harder the wood. Red Oak is the industry benchmark for comparing the relative hardness of different wood species.

**6 Split:** A lengthwise separation of fibres resulting from natural, environmental and/or mechanical pressures. May be at the end of a board or on the surface.

**7 Check:** A short, narrow, shallow separation of the wood, perpendicular to the annual growth rings. May be located in the centre or at the ends of boards.

**8 Grade:** The classification of flooring strips based on the natural color and character marks in the wood (mineral streaks, knots, etc.). The grade refers to the appearance of the product.

**9 Relative humidity:** The ratio of the amount of water vapour present in the air to the amount of water that can be held by that air at a given temperature.

**10 Gloss:** The gloss level or luster of a surface is determined by the amount of light it reflects. A glossy surface reflects more light than a matte surface.

**11 Character marks:** Natural "imperfections" in the wood such as mineral streaks, knots and coloration that give the product its unique appearance.

**12 Wood oxidation:** A natural phenomenon by which the color of wood changes after exposure to air and ambient light. This change varies depending on the species.

**13 Micro V-joint:** The 45° angle at the junction between the surface and the side of the flooring strips when they are laid side by side. The result is a small "V" shape, whence the name "V-joint."

**14 Pith:** The soft-surfaced core of a tree trunk or branch.

**15 Knot:** The portion of a branch embedded in the wood. There are several types of knots, including sound and open knots.

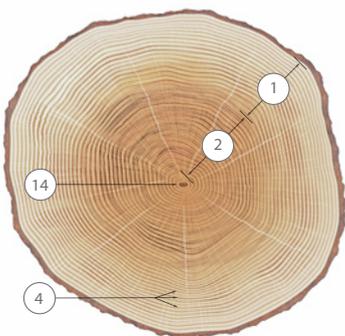
**16 Pin knot:** A tiny sound knot, less than 1/8" (3.2 mm) in diameter.

**17 Open knot:** A knot that is open in the centre; it is often filled with wood putty.

**18 Engineered wood flooring:** A floor made up of a hardwood surface bonded to a substrate.

**19 Rays:** The cellular structure of the tree extending from the outer part of the tree toward the centre (perpendicular to the annual growth rings).

**20 Mineral streak:** A general term describing a pigmentation in the wood. This coloration appears in the form of a streak or stain ranging from greenish brown to jet black.





Proudly made in North America  
[mercierwoodflooring.com](http://mercierwoodflooring.com)



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Please note that the images in this brochure are for illustrative purposes only. A picture cannot represent the extent of character marks, shades, textures and colors in a grade and species. There may be a variation in appearance between the images in this brochure, the sample panel in store and the floor you receive.