



Virgin-growth, old-growth, original-growth, antique or aged...

What exactly does that mean in the wood world? And more importantly, how can the consumer — whether homeowner, design professional or builder — be assured they are receiving the “real deal”?

The Reclaimed Wood Council was formed to educate buyers and set standards for reputable manufacturers of these amazing woods. Because most old woods provide exceptional quality and beauty, they are well worth recovering and milling into flooring, stair parts, beams, paneling and other products.

Although the Reclaimed Wood Council is no longer in existence due to increased numbers of smaller providers who may not always follow standard practices, these Reclaimed Wood Council definitions may assist you in your search for the perfect reclaimed wood.



River Recovered® Antique Heart Pine in the Corporate Offices for ‘This Old House’, NYC.

<p><i>American Chestnut</i></p>	<p><i>Wood Genus:</i> Castenea Dentata</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 50 + years at harvest from structures 50 – 200 + years of age</p> <p><i>Brief historical information:</i> Nearly extinct</p> <p><i>Heartwood content:</i> 90-100%</p> <p><i>Grain pattern:</i> linear to arching (vertical to flat)</p> <p><i>Knot content:</i> few to 3”</p> <p><i>Growth rings:</i> 4 to 12 or more</p> <p><i>Color:</i> blond to rich deep brown</p> <p><i>Nail holes:</i> few to frequent</p> <p><i>Widths available:</i> 2 1/2” to 15” +</p>
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	<p>Other characteristics: Generally wormy with larger knots and character markings.</p> <p>Comments: Often the most expensive reclaimed wood.</p>
<p>Antique Heart Cypress</p>	<p>Wood species: Bald Cypress (Taxodium distichum)</p> <p>Age: 500 years and older</p> <p>Brief historical information: Original-growth Bald Cypress trees are one of the last prehistoric species still standing and are known for their distinctive “knees”, the over-growths from the root system. The Bald Cypress tree commonly lived more 1000 years and towered over 100 feet to produce 100 percent heart wood. Millions of acres of these magnificent trees once covered the coastal Southeast, but were essentially cleared by hand in the 18th and 19th centuries to help build America. Because the wood is resistant to insects, water and decay, it was often used for boats, houses, dock pilings, flooring and outside furniture. The wood was a favorite of Frank Lloyd Wright and is usually the healthiest wood found when his homes are restored.</p> <p>Heartwood content: 100 percent</p> <p>Grain pattern: A combination of subtle swirls and delicate straight grains</p> <p>Knot content: rare, usually not over 1 ¼”</p> <p>Growth rings: At least 8 per inch; up to 80</p> <p>Color: typically honey cinnamon to tans to warm chocolates</p> <p>Nail holes: almost of the available heart cypress is river reclaimed with no nail holes</p> <p>Widths available: typically up to 10” in flooring and up to 14” in lumber and even up to 40+”</p> <p>Other characteristics: 690 on the Janka scale, comparable to Douglas Fir</p> <p>Comments: Because of environmental conditions, second growth cypress wood lacks the decay resistance of original growth trees and is substantially less valuable.</p>

<p><i>Antique Heart Pine</i></p>	<p><i>Wood species:</i> Longleaf Heart Pine (Pinus palustris)</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 200 to 500 years and older</p> <p><i>Brief historical information:</i> About 90 million acres of longleaf heart pine once covered the coastal Southeast, but was clear cut by hand in the 18th and 19th centuries to build Industrial America. It is often seen in old factories, wharves, Victorian palaces, bridges like the Brooklyn Bridge, and homes including Mount Vernon and Monticello. The few remaining stands of longleaf are protected today, thus it is only available from old buildings or river reclaimed logs. The wood was highly prized for its strength, durability and beauty.</p> <p><i>Heartwood content:</i> 100 percent</p> <p><i>Grain pattern:</i> Pin striped or arching grains</p> <p><i>Knot content:</i> infrequent in river recovered, some more in building reclaimed, can be order clear with only a few pin knots up to 1/2"</p> <p><i>Growth rings:</i> At least 6 per inch in building reclaimed and 8 per inch in river reclaimed on average; up to 30</p> <p><i>Color:</i> typically rich red</p> <p><i>Nail holes:</i> some in building reclaimed; none in river reclaimed</p> <p><i>Widths available:</i> typically up to 10" in flooring and up to 12" in lumber</p> <p><i>Other characteristics:</i> Very strong, stable and hard. 1225 on the Janka scale. Comparable to red oak but 29% more stable</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> The longleaf grows only one inch in diameter every thirty years, but a tree less than 200 years old is considered "new heart pine." A 75-year-old tree will average only 30% heart, and even a 130-year-old tree yields wood that is not as hard or rich in color as antique heart pine. "Old-growth" does not mean it is antique. The term is used loosely and often refers to new heart pine.</p>
<p><i>Douglas Fir</i></p>	<p><i>Wood species:</i> Pinaceae (not a true fir)</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 50-200 years +</p> <p><i>Brief historical information:</i> Primarily a western US Species. Douglas Fir, due to its structural qualities, has been used</p>

	<p>extensively in the manufacture of timbers for framing, and in building and mining. It also nails well and can found in interior joinery for doors, flooring, and mouldings.</p> <p>Heartwood content:</p> <p>Grain pattern: Both quarter and flat sawn.</p> <p>Knot content: Can be graded for both clear and knotty grades.</p> <p>Growth rings: Six to twenty or more per inch.</p> <p>Color: Reddish brown shades in heartwood to near white sapwood layer.</p> <p>Nail holes: Can possess, depending upon original use, nail and/or bolt holes. Frequency will range from occasional to heavy.</p> <p>Widths available: 3" - 18"+</p> <p>Other characteristics: Wide plank flooring is readily available and less costly than most other reclaimed wood species.</p> <p>Comments: The wood is relatively soft and care must be taken to protect the finish.</p>
<p>Eastern White Pine</p>	<p>Wood Genus: Pinus Strobus</p> <p>Age: 50 + years at harvest from structures 50 – 200 + years of age</p> <p>Brief historical information:</p> <p>Heartwood content: 90 – 100%</p> <p>Grain pattern: Linear to arching (quarter to flat)</p> <p>Knot content: Few to frequent, up to 3” in diameter</p> <p>Growth rings: 4 to 12 or more</p> <p>Color: Cream to medium brown</p> <p>Nail holes: Few to frequent</p> <p>Widths available: 2 1/2 “ to 16” +</p>

	<p>Other characteristics: Soft and considered an inexpensive wood.</p> <p>Comments: Commonly used in 18th and 19th century homes in the NE.</p>
<p>Oak</p>	<p>Wood species: Quequs</p> <p>Age: 75 + years at harvest. From structures 50-200 + years of age</p> <p>Brief historical information:</p> <p>Heartwood content: 90-100%</p> <p>Grain pattern: Linear to arching grains (vertical to flat). Not available as all vertical grain.</p> <p>Knot content: Few to frequent, up to 3"</p> <p>Growth rings: 6 to 20</p> <p>Color: Blush to medium brown in red oak. Light brown to rich, deep brown in white oak</p> <p>Nail holes: Few to frequent. Grading standards are much less clear for Oak than Heart Pine.</p> <p>Widths available: 2 1/2" to 16"+</p> <p>Other characteristics:</p> <p>Comments: Most of what is sold today as 'European Oak' flooring is actually #2 Common American Oak.</p>