

The "Brittleness" Myth

People often say to us "I read somewhere that Australian Cypress flooring is brittle and difficult to install". Poor Aussie Cypress has gotten an undeserved bad rap over this one.

So, to clarify:

Australian Cypress is a tough little character because it grows in some pretty tough conditions in Australia - relatively arid country with low rainfall and harsh seasonal changes. So it grows tough... tough with good specific density, but **not** brittle *per se*.

There are two main ingredients in this "brittleness" perception about Australian Cypress.

1) Percentage of moisture after drying

Key to properly preparing this wood when it is felled and milled is adequate drying before forming it into flooring. In Australia, it is kiln dried down to 10%-12% moisture, allowing it to retain reasonable plasticity. U.S. industry standards, however, require it to be dried down to 6%-8% moisture content. That's really dry. This degree of drying reduces the wood's plasticity, contributing to the perception that Australian Cypress is brittle.

It's not so much that the wood is inherently brittle but that the drying makes it susceptible to installation mishaps that people attribute to "brittleness".

2) Installation requires a little knowledge (and patience)

Prior to [installation](#), it is important to acclimate Australian Cypress flooring properly, so that there is an acceptable moisture differential between the sub-floor and the flooring. Your moisture meter is your best friend and it must be calibrated for Australian Cypress, not for American cypress which has a different specific density.

During installation, it is equally important to adjust the pressure of the cleat nailer so that it doesn't fire or recoil savagely off the tongue which could cause the tongue to split away. Again, it is not so much an attribute of the flooring wood rather than some careful adjustments needed during installation.

HINT: If you are buying from us and installing for yourself, ask for our "installation tip sheet".

The good news is that once your floor is installed, it is much more stable than many other woods because it is a dense wood. Remember what we said at the beginning of this post - that Australian Cypress grows in tough conditions? That's what makes the wood dense, and that density is what makes it stable once it is installed.

Go Aussie! Oi! Oi! Oi!

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