

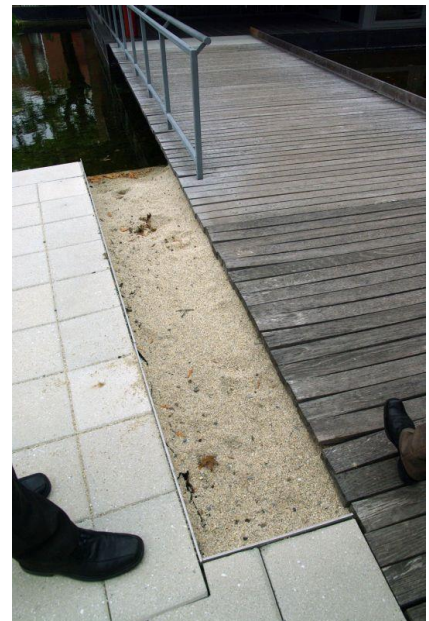
TECHNICAL BULLETIN – BLACK LOCUST

The question is frequently asked...Is Black Locust an 'Or Equal' substitute for Tropical Hardwood Decking?

Black Locust like Ipe or Cumaru is rated Highly Durable with a good resistance to termites by the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory. Unfortunately, this is where any claim to being equal ends. Black Locust, as a tree, is not particularly tall or straight so the lumber the tree generates is not particularly long and tends to be very high in natural defects unlike the tropical species which are available in long lengths and virtually defect free. As species, Black Locust has a reputation for being very dimensionally unstable having a tendency to warp and twist. Its historic use has been fence posts and rail road ties, heavy dimensional applications which reduce the potential for movement in service.

So what about Black Locust as a decking material?

Test strips in New York and New Jersey boardwalks have demonstrated poor performance on the part of Black Locust. A test Strip installed in Ocean City New Jersey in 2007 showed severe movement, splitting and excessive deflection by 2009. The low level of quality combined with dimensional instability and sourcing issues make the use of Black Locust as a decking material impractical. This was confirmed in a 2014 U.S. Army Core of Engineers Memo where Black Locust was not recommended for use in post Hurricane Sandy Boardwalk reconstruction.



Mayor Ernest Troiano Jr. said Wildwood turned to ipe wood because a shipment of domestically grown black locust wood arrived in unusable condition.