

new decking options

Shrinking forests and dwindling supplies of quality lumber have nudged the development of both alternative wood products and engineered materials suitable for decks and other garden structures. All these offerings are intended for decking and railings only; typically, they sit atop a standard deck frame (see page 117) built from structural softwoods or pressure-treated lumber.

The tropical connection

Decks are going uptown by first heading below the equator. These new imported hardwoods can create a nearly furniture-grade look, especially when installed with invisible fasteners. Ipé is a beautiful, durable, rot-resistant wood that does not need to be finished. Cambara and meranti are two other choices. Plantation-grown mahogany and teak are also available in some areas.

Because they're harder and heavier than domestic decking woods, most tropicals come in a thinner "5/4" thickness (about 1 inch thick).

To find suitable hardwood products, you may have to do some shopping on the Internet or talk with local wood suppliers.

Ipé, a newly available tropical hardwood, adds an almost furniture-grade feel to this deck design.





Above: Multiple stacked decks save space and serve multiple functions. The "public" deck is up top, a private bedroom deck below.

Right: Up on the roof, concrete pavers float in a river-rock "stream" that ends in a private sitting area.

Left: Inside meets outside in this owner-built, master-suite bath featuring a French door that opens to the nearby private patio and an in-ground spa pool.

