

INSTALLING A CYPRESS DECK

The *Natural* Choice



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Cypress – The Natural Choice

Cypress has long been known as one of nature's most durable woods. That's why for centuries it has been used for exterior applications, such as siding, fencing, shingles, landscaping and outdoor furniture.

In recent years, this penchant for durability has gained cypress newfound popularity as a decking product, especially as concerns have arisen about the chemicals used in pressure-treating. As more and more health-conscious homeowners are discovering, cypress comes by its durability naturally. Yet that doesn't mean cypress is impervious.

As with decks made from any wood product, special care and precautions must be followed during every stage of the installation process, from the way it is transported and stored at your home to the way it is sealed after the last nail goes in.

That is the purpose of this guide: to provide a detailed outline for building and caring for your cypress deck so that it can provide relaxation, pleasure

and entertainment not just for several summers, but for many years (and, hopefully, decades) to come.



Selecting the Lumber

When it comes to selecting the right decking for your home, there's no better product on (or for) the planet than wood. While there are myriad plastic and composite deck products, their manufacture consumes four to six times as much energy as wood.

What's more, unlike American-grown cypress, which is sustainably grown and harvested, these composite

products are typically made from petroleum products, which are an increasingly expensive and limited resource. That makes a cypress deck easier on your pocketbook, too.

To make the most of your investment, make sure the cypress decking materials you purchase are clean and have been dried to the proper moisture content. Installing cypress decking

while it is "green" or wet has the potential to lead to cracking, splintering and warping. That means your cypress should be stored in a dry place when you get it home, too.

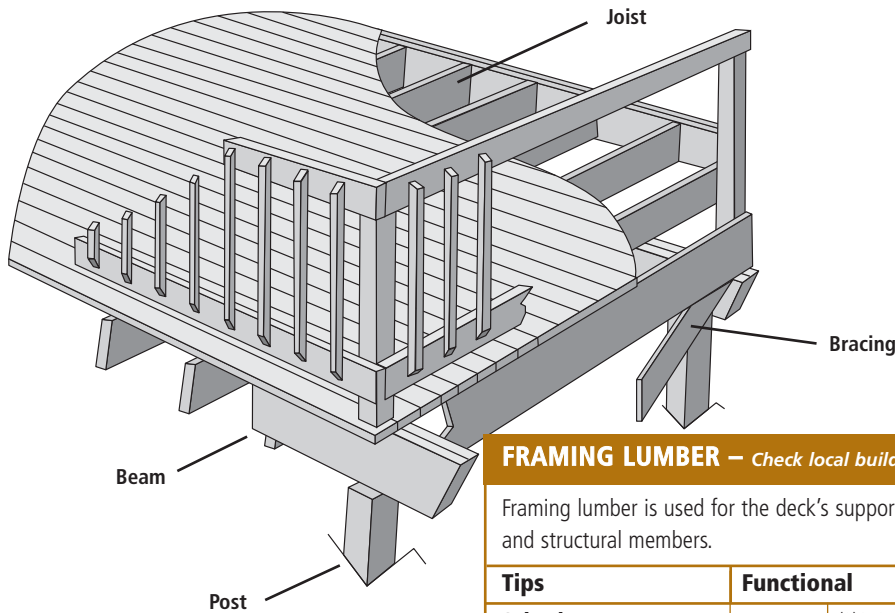
As for the best lumber grade, any cypress association-graded #2 or better should be sufficient to meet all your deck's structural requirements. Do not use cypress boards wider than six inches for any application that lies flat, such as deck flooring, seating or railing.

For the balusters, handrails and other visible portions of the deck, Select-grade cypress will yield the most attractive appearance.

Finally, the maximum span for cypress radius-edge decking (R.E.D.) and two-inch dimension lumber should not exceed 16" inches on center.

RECOMMENDED SPANS FOR CYPRESS DECKING

Grades	Sizes	Maximum Recommended Support Spacing*
#2 or Select	1"	16" on center*
Select	1 ½"	24" on center
<i>*12" on center if decking is installed horizontally</i>		



FRAMING LUMBER — Check local building codes for specific requirements

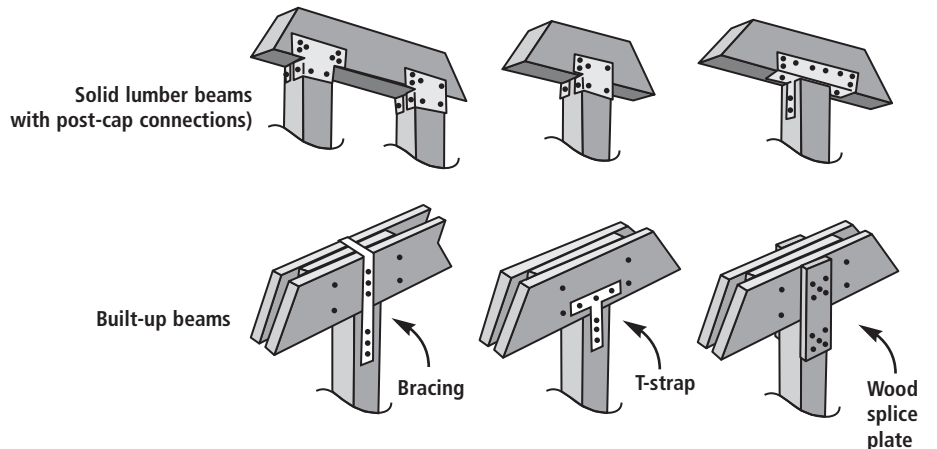
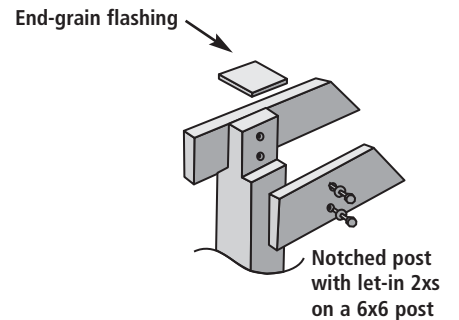
Framing lumber is used for the deck's supporting structure. Use pressure-treated for framing and structural members.

Tips	Functional		Superior	
Selection	Beams	(2)2x8, (2)2x10, (2)2x12 4x6, 4x8	Beams	(2)2x8, (2)2x10, (2)2x12 4x6, 4x8
	Bracing	2x4, 2x6	Bracing	2x4, 2x6
	Joists	2x6, 2x8, 2x10 No. 2 Cypress	Joists	2x6, 2x8, 2x10 Select Cypress allows for longer spans
Installation	Space joists 12" on center maximum if decking is diagonal		Space joists 12" on center maximum if decking is diagonal	
Durability	Pressure-treated lumber is recommended for in-ground and above ground use		Pressure-treated lumber is recommended for in-ground and above ground use	

POSTS — Check local building codes for specific requirements

Posts support the beams and transfer deck loads to the footings. Pressure-treated lumber is recommended for ground contact applications.

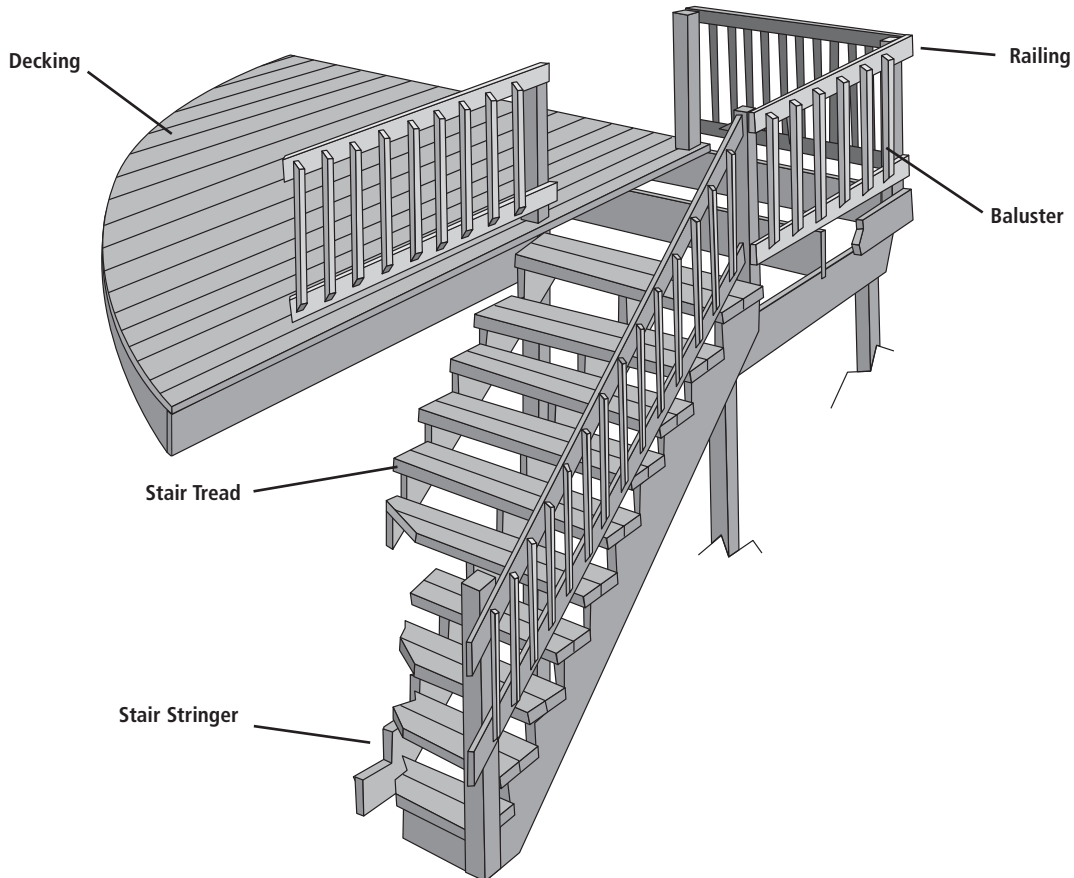
Tips	Common Practice	Superior Performance
Selection	4x4	6x6, 4x6
Installation		Larger posts provide added stability and a more solid look to the deck
Durability	Pressure-treated lumber is recommended for in-ground and above ground use	Pressure-treated lumber is recommended for in-ground and above ground use



RAILINGS — Check local building codes for specific requirements

Railings must include a baluster system that prevents the passage of a 4" sphere.

Tips	Functional		Superior	
Selection	Balusters	2x2 Cypress	Balusters	2x2 Cypress Select
	Railings & Rail Caps	2x4 Cypress No. 2	Railings & Rail Caps	2x4 Cypress Select
	Posts	4x4 Cypress No. 2	Posts	4x4, 6x6, 4x6 Cypress Select



DECKING & STAIR TREADS

Decking and stair treads provide the deck's walking surfaces.

	Common Grade	Select Grade
Selection	No. 2 Grade R.E.D. (5/4 x 6) or 2x4 or 2x6 Cypress No.2	Select Grade R.E.D. (5/4 x 6) or 2x4 or 2x6 Cypress Select
Installation	Space tightly together if decking is not completely dry at the time of installation to allow for shrinkage. Space using a 16d nail for dried material to allow for expansion.	Space tightly together if decking is not completely dry at the time of installation to allow for shrinkage. Space using a 16d nail for dried material to allow for expansion. Drill pilot holes for fasteners.
Durability	Untreated lumber should be finished with sealer; otherwise pressure-treated lumber is recommended for above ground use.	Untreated lumber should be finished with sealer; otherwise pressure-treated lumber is recommended for above ground use.

Metal Fasteners and Hardware

Metal fasteners (nails, screws and bolts) and hardware (joist hangers and post anchors, etc.) can corrode, which can detract from the appearance of your deck and ultimately affect its safety and performance. As a result, best practice is to bear joints and beams directly on posts whenever possible.

To build a good deck, however, the need for good fasteners is unavoidable. Stainless steel fasteners have shown the best longevity, followed by hot-dipped galvanized fasteners.

Hot-dipped galvanized nails should also be used instead of standard carbon-steel nails and electroplated galvanized nails. Ring- or spiral-shank screws should be used instead of nails when securing decking to joists. For more details, please refer to the chart to the right.

DECKING FASTENER GUIDE						
Minimum requirements for fasteners*						
Nails	Screws			Hidden Fasteners		
Common hot-dip galvanized nails are an economical fastener choice for attaching deck components together.	Galvanized screws are commonly used to secure the treated Cypress decking to joists.			Metal clips, wafers, and metal strips are three types of hidden fasteners attached to joists and concealed from overhead view. Check with manufacturers of hidden fasteners to determine the proper fastening schedules.		
Ring-shank or spiral-shank nails offer improved holding power.	Use 2-1/2" screws to securely fasten decking.					
<p><i>*Hot-dip galvanized fasteners are recommended for above-grade applications and should meet ASTM A153. Connectors should meet ASTM A653, Class G185 with 1.85 ounces of zinc coating per square foot minimum. For coatings other than galvanized (e.g. powder or ceramic) check with the manufacturer to ensure the fastener is recommended for use with pressure-treated lumber.</i></p> <p><i>Type 304 or 316 stainless steel fasteners and connectors, commonly used in severe exterior exposures, provide maximum corrosion resistance.</i></p>						
FASTENER SCHEDULE						
	Functional			Performance		
Decking	5/4 x 6	2x4	2x6	5/4 x 6	2x4	2x6
Nails	(2) 8d	(2) 10d	(2) 10d	(3) 8d	(2) 10d	(3) 10d
Durability	(2) 2-1/2"	(2) 2-1/2"	(2) 2-1/2"	(3) 2-1/2"	(2) 2-1/2"	(3) 2-1/2"

Finishing

Once your deck is built, it can be stained or sealed immediately, provided it is dry. To select the best finish for your deck, talk with your local building products retailer or paint supplier and follow strictly the finishing directions and recommendations provided by the product manufacturer.

Water-repellent sealer should be applied to all exposed surfaces and ends on your deck as soon as practically possible. (Do not apply if the wood is wet.) The proper application of a good sealer will help protect your deck from weathering and maintain its appearance.



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As with any wood, sealer should be reapplied to your cypress deck every one to two years. For best results, a deck cleaner should be used to remove dirt and mildew before any sealer is reapplied.

The best sealing products are those that actually penetrate the wood. Most also contain a moisture inhibitor such as paraffin wax and a binder. Some also contain a pigment to add color to your deck.

When purchasing a sealer, be sure to distinguish between "paintable" sealers, which contain lower concentrations of water repellent (to facilitate the application of paint) and stand-alone sealers, which contain a high percent-

age of water repellent. Consider using a water-repellent preservative. These products usually contain a mildewicide along with a moisture inhibitor.

If you want to stain to your deck, penetrating transparent or semi-transparent oil-based products formulated especially for decks usually work best. You can use more than one coat as long as subsequent coats are applied while the previous coat is still wet (usually within 30 to 45 minutes). If the stain has already dried, subsequent coats create a film that will eventually produce unsightly cracks in the finish.

Do not use a stain formulated for siding or other horizontal surfaces. Paint or heavily pigmented stains (solid color stains) also are not recommended for your cypress deck.

Maintenance

There is no such thing as a maintenance-free deck. Wood decks, just like those made from composite plastics and other artificial materials, should be kept free from dirt, oils and mildew.

If water still beads on your deck after rain or being sprayed with a hose, you probably do not need to reseal



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the wood. If the water soaks in, reapply the same water-repellent finish you used the first time or find one that is compatible.

If you are refinishing a deck with a semi-transparent stain, apply the water-repellent after the finish is dry.

General Do's and Don'ts

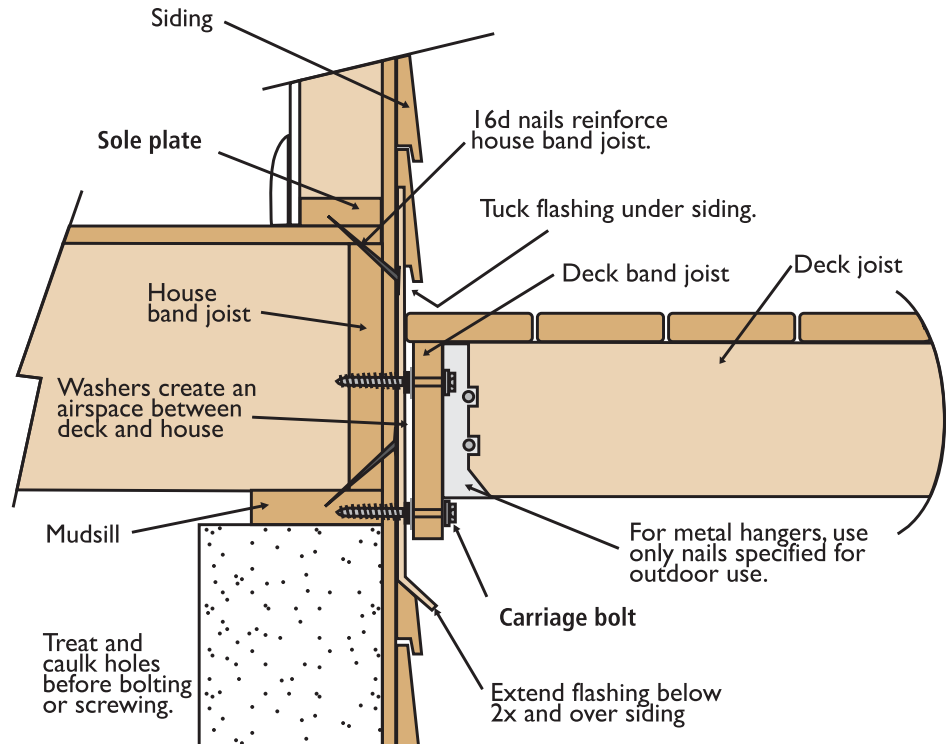
■ If you are building a deck that is attached to your house, make sure the framing is strong enough to bear the additional loads the deck will provide, including people, furniture, a grill, toys, bikes and other items. If possible, the deck should be bolted directly to the house with a waterproof connection and an air space that prevents moisture build-up.

■ Bracing is recommended for free-standing decks as well as elevated decks requiring long support poles.

■ Be sure to use corrosion-resistant fasteners and connectors. (See the Deck Fastener Guide on page 4.)

■ Use penetrating sealers and finishes only. Do not use film-forming finishes such as paint, solid color stains, varnishes and lacquers as they will eventually crack and peel. Always choose finishes that soak into the wood.

■ Avoid any deck designs that facilitate the trapping of moisture. Untreated and unsealed wood that is continually exposed to moisture will eventually warp and/or splinter.



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