

Preserved wood performs best for landscaping

As predictable as the blooms of spring, home centers welcome the warmer weather by selling outdoor products such as inexpensive landscape timbers coated with a cherry-tone stain or in other colors.

Too often, buyers believe these landscape timbers have been properly pressure treated with preservatives. Unfortunately, these timbers will deteriorate from decay and insects after only a few years, as the coatings on the wood offer little protection from nature.

For the best performance, make sure to select preserved wood landscape timbers that have been pressure treated. These products are well suited for outdoor use, will provide a long service life and offer a better value for homeowners.

Beware of low-priced timbers

Untreated landscape timbers are typically sold at bargain prices. The timbers are often coated with a thin layer of stain, which can be appear as cherry-tone red or dark brown or light green.

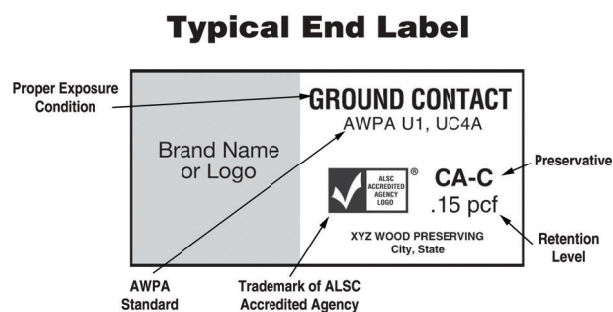
While these may approximate the colors seen in preserved wood products, they do not indicate the wood has been pressure treated.

Treated landscape timbers provide a much longer service life, lasting 5 to 8 times longer. This makes preserved wood landscape timbers a truly sustainable product. Over the course of a service life of at least 20 to 30 years, another tree can be grown to provide the wood for a replacement product.

Choosing the right wood

Preserved wood landscape timbers treated for ground contact are uniquely suited to protect against the rigors of outdoor exposure. While they cost more, these products are designed to provide decades of service, delivering a higher long-term value to homeowners.

There are a variety of preservatives available for landscape timbers. The amount of preservative infused into the wood, or the retention, and the depth of penetration into the wood have been tested to ensure the appropriate retention for the intended exposure.



There are a couple ways to identify whether landscape timbers have been pressure-treated with preservatives. Signs at retail locations may indicate the landscape timber is untreated or treated with preservatives. Also, many pressure-treated timbers have a label affixed on the end detailing the preservative and use condition.

End labels provide important information for selecting the right product. Landscape timbers placed on or in the ground should have a label stating "Ground Contact" or "Ground Contact Use". The label should also indicate the Use Category, such as "UC4A" or "UC4B".

Untreated landscape timbers may seem like a bargain, however they typically fall short of the performance expectations and often require full replacement after only a few years. For just a little more initial investment, preservative-treated landscape timbers offer a long service life with little maintenance.

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