

Southern Yellow Pine Flooring, Heart Pine and everything you need to know about buying pine floors.

If Pine was sold like wine; location and age would matter, right?

### Alabama Longleaf Pine

Only about 5% of total pine production in the United States is Longleaf pine, the harvestable stands are becoming increasingly difficult find. Longleaf pine grows much slower and therefore is not conducive the fast-growing pine plantations that produce pine for building materials.

Our floors are unique in that we do not cull based on defects, we sort, or cull based on visible heart content. Our Alabama Heart Pine will contain 50-80% visible on the face, heart and or sapwood. This differs greatly from the major box store offender who sells 50% content heart pine, but they mean 50% of the boards have heartwood. Not at all the same thing, not even close.

### Southern Yellow Pine is not a species

In general, Southern Yellow Pine is 4 species. Most think it is a species all its own, which is in the top five of myths we dispel every day. Southern Yellow Pine is a description, much as Alabama Heart Pine is a description and we use that state name because of the cache. The soil, climate and available resources make this descriptive term let the buyer, in most cases understand the nature of the flooring with regards to age, knots etc. Plus, longleaf heartwood is beautiful. The grain is not your usual oak pattern (found in 75% of homes) and is a rich, red color thanks to the resin. One hundred percent heartwood means the color will be consistent. Even 98 percent heart will have yellow sapwood streaks that produce a strong/obvious color variation.

### Janka Hardness Scale

Janka Hardness of Caribbean Heart pine is 1280, Heart Pine 1250 and Southern Yellow Pine 690. Now those numbers, two of them anyway are very misleading. The 690 score of Southern Yellow Pine takes in all the species within, what is, really a description and not a standalone species. As for our Southern Yellow Pine, our #2 Longleaf Southern Yellow Pine will have a varied amount of heart and or sap wood in every board and pallet (bundle). Measuring the actual hardness is impossible. As for the 1250 of Heart Pine, some will be discussed below in the heart content paragraph, but just know that the industry has no watch dog for heart content and marketing. Buyer beware. Ask the

question; “does your 50% heart content ad mean 50% or better, 50% is max or does it mean, and this is happening today that 50% of the boards will have heart content.

## Flooring mills or Lumber Yard

First, we are not disparaging lumber yards. On the contrary, they produce the real building materials, we just do floors. We do sell 2 x 4's because our raw materials are more valuable as flooring, end of story. Most lumber yards think of flooring as an after-thought, most pine mills anyway. They produce their flooring from the same materials with which they create the dimensional lumber or 2 x 4's which have very strict standards compared to floor grades.

## Heart Content

What constitutes heart content? What is the difference between sap wood and heartwood? All wood has outer sapwood and inner heartwood layers. The sapwood is the transport system of the tree, moving water and nutrients up from the roots. The heartwood is the older and denser inner layers of the tree. Heartwood is not metabolically active and is the waste storage area of the tree as well as the tree's primary support structure. Heartwood is usually darker than sapwood due to the stored compounds. Remember that Heart Pine is not a species it is about time and age, which is not found in fast growing timber grown to build houses.

## Caribbean Heart Pine

Caribbean Heart Pine is a beautiful wood prized throughout the world for its distinctive grain, rich, lustrous patina, and durable hardness. Our Caribbean Heart Pine is uniform in color and will range from golden brown to red brown heartwood to lighter brown sapwood. Caribbean Heart Pine deepens in dark red color over time. Caribbean Heart Pine has a Janka rating of 1280, only a small fraction less than Northern Red Oak.

The grades are not sorted based on heart content but rather knot frequency and the rustic grade will more color variation and character. The rustic grade will have more frequent knots and the sapwood will generally be within this grade. The select or prime grade will have in frequent knots, a darker color and a more consistent color range. Tongue and Groove and End Matched One to twelve-foot lengths with average of seven for rustic grade and six for select.