

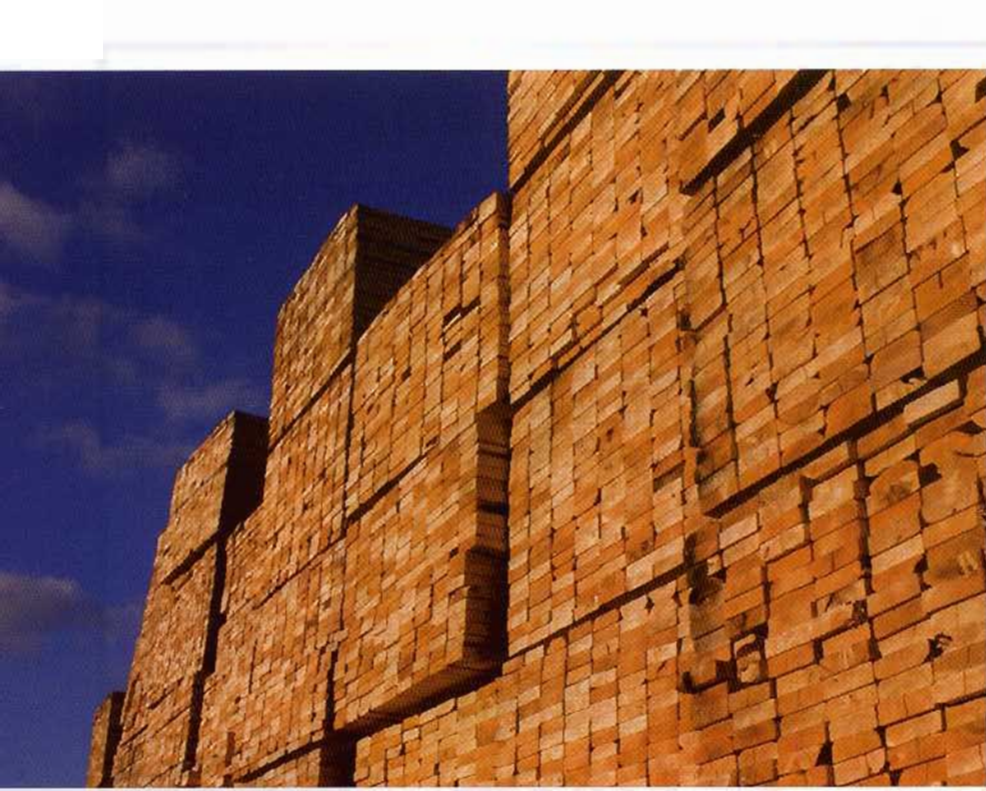
# Specialty Woods Aspect to Home

(COURTESY OF THE HAWAII LUMBER PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION)

Some days when driving around Hawaii, it may seem that with the sheer number of people living on our islands, every possible housing option has already been explored. We have condos, planned communities, decades-old family homes and high-rise apartments. What could a new home builder possibly do to make their home stand apart and add something new to the landscape? One simple solution, as suggested by the Hawaii Lumber Products Association (HLPA), is to consider building a new home with specialty woods.

Specialty wood is lumber processed from tree species other than the traditional softwoods such as pine, cedar, hemlock, fir or spruce. Specialty wood includes hundreds of tree species as well-known as oak, walnut and cherry, or as exotic as Italian olive, ebony, chestnut, Ipe or a local favorite, koa.

"In addition, sometimes the term specialty wood is used to denote an unusual use of common wood such as a very large Douglas fir



standards would, instead, permit maximum flexibility for designers and builders to meet a defined level of protection by responding to the demands of each project, and would permit new and innovative control methods to be adopted without recourse to new legislation.

Effective control of termites requires several lines of defense which may be selected from the six measures previously outlined. Allowances must be made for the inevitable imperfections in construction and maintenance. However, with the products, technologies and approaches now available, wood frame buildings remain a viable option even in the most termite-prone areas.

## Canadian Wood Council

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### Web sites:

Canadian Wood Council: [www.cwcc.ca](http://www.cwcc.ca)  
Canada's Forest Network: [www.cfn.ca](http://www.cfn.ca)  
Wood Design & Building Magazine: [www.wood.ca](http://www.wood.ca)  
WoodWorks® Design Office Software: [www.woodworks-software.com](http://www.woodworks-software.com)  
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beam or the aromatic cedar that is used in cedar chests or closets," said Hardware Hawaii's Larry Lanning, an HPLA member. "While many people choose to use Douglas fir or cedar in constructing their homes, in these types of special cases, their use is not something we see everyday and it certainly adds to the charm and originality of the home."

Specialty woods come in a variety of colors and grains, guaranteeing the unique nature of each homebuyer's selection. Most specialty woods are used for flooring, paneling, molding, cabinets, furniture and other interior uses. Particularly valued for their decorative traits and the excellent wear value intrinsic in a hardwood, specialty woods are rarely seen in a framing capacity, except for the occasional home where the builders have selected exposed overhead beams, for example.

Popular uses of specialty wood can be seen through demonstration of two favorite specialty woods. Brazillian Ipe wood is so dense that it actually sinks in water. The advantage of this fact is that termites cannot eat Ipe, it weathers incredibly well, and with a simple oil coating,



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Ipe's beautiful rich brown color makes for an amazing decking and flooring that is sure to last for years. More commonly known, oak is a home favorite for flooring and cabinetry providing the durability and beauty that many homes seek.

Homes with interior accents made

of specialty wood are also a good bet to keep or improve on their resale value. The one-of-a-kind originality that comes from selecting a specialty wood will transfer when the decision to sell is made. As can be expected, woods used in home construction are known to last for generations and

have a homey feel and appeal that is endearing to many home buyers.

"Specialty woods, especially here in Hawaii, can be a really interesting way to showcase our culture and appreciation of the land through use of native species, like koa," said HPLA President Hap Person.

One important thing to keep in mind when selecting your specialty wood is the decision to use a softwood versus a hardwood. Softwoods traditionally retain less moisture than hardwood and are therefore a more popular choice in building. By working with the site home designer or builder, home buyers can select the best specialty wood for their home. A California redwood is an example of specialty wood that is also a softwood and a prime choice for framing.

Common uses for specialty woods include flooring, molding, cabinets and other interior accents.

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