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www.LBRtimber.comE-Mail: **jim@LBRtimber.com****SaBra-Brand Tropical Decking : Grades & Moisture Contents**

It seems that everybody calls their Tropical Decking grade by a different name. Actually, it's easy to understand why. While IBAMA governs the way Brazilian species are harvested, there is no standardized Grading Agency for Brazilian hardwoods. We in North America rely on NHLA, or SPIB, or WCLIB, etc., to define the grades and expectations for lumber.

But not so from South America. Different people call their grades by different names, with these being proprietary and appearance related. The essence of the grade then becomes the characteristics of the grade, and NOT the name of the grade.

SaBra represents its SaBra-Brand grades as closely to our sawmill's name and definition of the grades that we purchase. As we are an extension of our sawmills, we feel it best to describe grade as our sawmills do.

Currently, our mills produce to these Grades and Characteristics:

Premium / First = Some may call this **FEQ** or **FAS**. This is the prevalent "top grade" our sawmills produce. This is predominately Clear one face and two edges, occasional sound tight pin-knots may allow, and All Heart No Sap.

Select & Btr = This is a mix of some First, with most in Select. Select will allow some minor defects in sap, reverse grain, pinworm, tight knots, and skip worst face.

ComSel = This is a mix of Select and Common. Is a downfall accumulation from higher grades. The Common allows not so small sap and nervous grain, and also scattered defects as pinworm, tight knots, and skip.

Comments On Moisture Content:

Kiln Dried = Moisture Content is in the range of 12-16% MC. IPE' is most often not KD'ed, as IPE' is a very dimensionally stable species, although some markets favor KD IPE'. Other Alternative Decking Species should all be Kiln Dried, due to being lesser in dimensional stability. KD Decking is generally dead-stack-packed in units.

Air Dried to Green = This can be a wide range of Moisture Content, from true AD in the low 20's% MC, to dead GRN up to 40's% MC. Every load could be different, often dictated by the time of year. The impact could extend itself to different shrinking expectations in application, with normal ranges of 1/8" to 1/4" across the face. AD/GRN Decking is generally stickered-each-row for air-acclimation, which makes possibilities of sticker shadow across the rows. Further, particularly when weather and heat is more extreme, AD/GRN Decking can "greenhouse" with a surface mildew at times, from transit in enclosed containers, or storage in closed warehouses.

As our sawmills inform us, and as we inform our clients, unfortunately sticker stain and occasional mildew are unavoidable parts of doing AD/GRN Decking business, and are the buyer's responsibility. Both sticker stain and occasional mildew will acclimate-out over time, which can be expedited by power washing, sanding, or use of 'fungicides' or 'deck washes'. KD Decking alleviates many of these issues.