

Spring Home & Garden Guide

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The versatility of engineered wood flooring

Wood flooring in every room of your home?

For centuries people have used wood floors in their homes to add warmth, elegance and charm. Hardwood floors never go out of fashion and can add real value to your home. But until now some rooms, such as bathrooms and basements, were not considered good fits for wood floors because of humidity concerns.

That's because wood swells like a sponge when it absorbs moisture and contracts as it dries out, causing dimensional variations in wood materials.

A simple way to prevent dimensional variations in wood is to control air temperature and relative humidity using a humidifier or an air exchanger. However, in some situations, such as in bathrooms and basements, this may be hard to achieve and floorboards will contract and expand. The solution for homeowners looking for wood flooring in these rooms is a product with enhanced dimensional stability that is less susceptible to changing conditions -- engineered wood flooring.

According to Michel Collin, Marketing Director at Mercier Wood Flooring, a leading manufacturer of quality wood flooring, engineered flooring is made of plywood with a thin hardwood surface layer glued on top. Each layer of the plywood is glued so that the grain runs perpendicular to the next. This limits the contracting and swelling action as the movement of each layer is counteracted by the opposite movement of the next layer, thereby enhancing dimensional stability.

This is most evident in Mercier engineered flooring,

Collin explained, as unlike most engineered flooring, which is composed of three to five layers, Mercier's contains seven crossbanded layers for optimum stability.

"Engineered wood floors are constructed differently from solid wood floors and offer some advantages," he added. "Thanks to advancements in manufacturing technology, engineered wood floors can be used in almost any room in the home. This includes installing over dry, concrete slabs and some types of existing flooring. So now homeowners can enjoy the beauty of a real hardwood floor in areas they never thought possible before with solid wood flooring."

Most engineered wood floors are pre-finished at the factory, which eliminates the mess, extra time and fumes associated with applying the finish coats at home.

Collin notes that engineered flooring is not meant as a substitute for solid hardwood flooring. It is designed for applications where solid wood won't perform as well. Engineered flooring is also a great choice for renovations because it can be glued directly onto an existing floor.



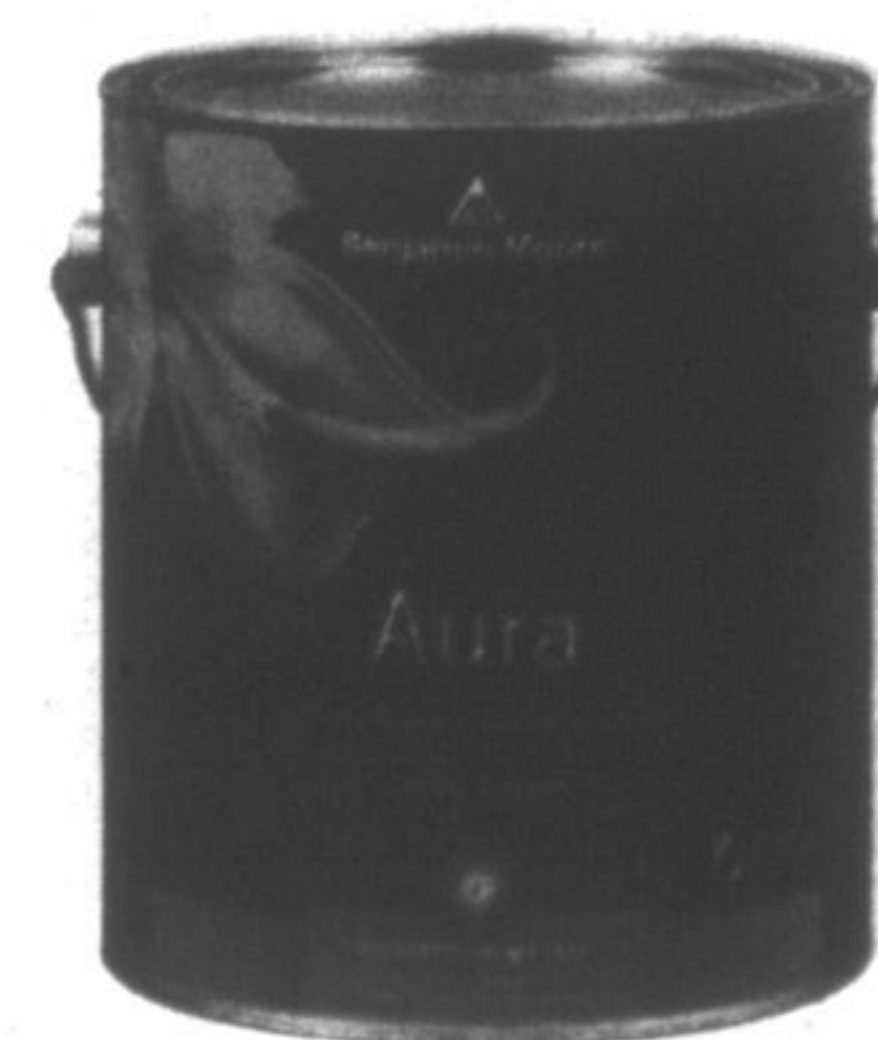
With advancements in manufacturing technology, engineered wood floors can be used in almost any room in the home

"Our engineered wood flooring is perfect anywhere," Collin added. "Its versatility and timeless appeal make it an ideal match in any decor, from the basement to the bedroom." More information on engineered wood flooring is available at www.mercierflooring.com. (MS)



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