

Timber Topics

Making the most of merchant sales throughout the year

May 2021

‘Sleepers’ or landscaping timbers?

Accurate descriptions for wood products



Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI) and ‘sleepers’

In a post-Grenfell world, it’s essential to make sure product descriptions are accurate. The CCPI is aiming to ensure that all products, right across the construction sector, are properly-described and fit for purpose. So what do we do about ‘Sleepers’?

The name ‘sleepers’ harks back to the days when ex-railway sleepers were recycled as landscaping timbers. Ex-railway sleepers were full of timber preservative. Over time, in customers’ minds, an association has grown up between products labelled as ‘sleepers’ and their longevity in contact with the ground. Yet without appropriate preservative treatment, softwood ‘sleepers’ will not perform adequately.

What’s in a name?

Continuing to use the term ‘sleepers’ isn’t an accurate product description. Today’s products rarely if ever come into the merchant sector as recycled wood from a railway context. The term ‘landscaping timbers’ is much more appropriate. You may already have a landscaping category you can add them to. Accurately describing their preservative treatment is also key. A Use Class 4 treatment is needed for material that’s in contact with the ground.



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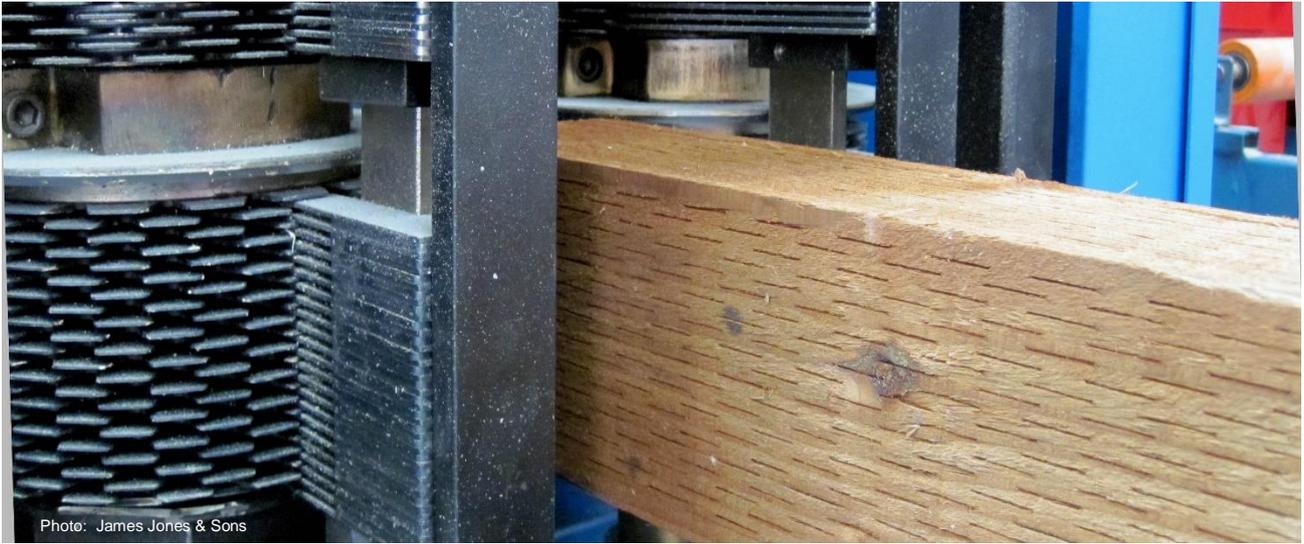


Photo: James Jones & Sons



Photo: hardwood from International Timber

Softwood species & preservatives

Marketing large-section landscaping timbers gives you an opportunity to underline your knowledge of timber treatments and their application. One of the most common softwood landscaping timber sizes, 100x200mm, can be marketed for various garden uses. Used away from of ground contact, as with benches and decorative timbers, a UC3 treatment may be appropriate. Used on or in the ground, including structurally, landscaping timbers need to have a UC4 level of treatment for temporary or permanent ground contact. To achieve UC4, Spruce (Whitewood) needs to be incised, enabling better take-up of the preservative. For certainty, many suppliers and merchants are opting for incised UC4 preservative-treated timbers for landscaping material. Pine (Redwood) takes UC4 treatment well. Increasing volumes of this material are now being offered for landscaping applications. Sawn 100x200mm softwood treated to Use Class 2 for interior use only should not be sold as 'sleepers' or as landscaping timbers.

Hardwood alternatives

Hardwood landscaping timbers rely on natural durability. Be clear about the species and check EN350 for the durability class. Download free treatment marketing materials here:

www.ttf.co.uk/merchants/merchant-resources

**SELL TREATED
TIMBER?**

Say it right.
Sell it right.



Download info 

**Green treated?
Brown treated?
Exterior?**

Download info 

~~**Green treated?
Brown treated?
Exterior?**~~

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UC 2 Dry interior ✓

UC 3 Outside above ground ✓

UC 4 Outside on & in ground ✓

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