

# DeepStream Designs

[www.DeepStreamDesign.com](http://www.DeepStreamDesign.com)

## About Wood

It is the character of wood - warm and sophisticated, yet rugged - that makes it our favorite material for our planters. Getting to work with it in the shop is a very rewarding and almost spiritual experience. Wood's warmth of color and feel, the figuring of its grain, and its varied organic nature give each piece its own unique identity in an increasingly uniform world.

However, if you seek perfect uniformity over the character of wood then we have a myriad of other options for you including no maintenance recycled plastic lumber. Also if you do not want to maintain wood then expect it to go gray with out maintenance, or darken if you use protective waterproofing and UV filters.

While all of the characteristics of the woods we use make it beautiful for indoor applications and rugged enough for the outdoors, it is not for everyone or every project. The planks we use are solid  $\frac{3}{4}$ " flooring grade tropical hardwoods that are appropriate for ship and deck construction. This planking has more wonderful character than you will find in thin, uniform cabinetry-grade veneers of similar wood. This includes shallow chips, small knots, burrs, interlocking and wooly grain.

We revere wood, the trees and the natural environment that it comes from, and we never waste it. If it is structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing, we use it. Non-structural flaws are part of the natural character of the wood, especially in plantation grown wood, that we cherish in our planters. Because we have sized our planters around standard plank lengths, cut-off pieces are minimal and all trimmings and sawdust are taken to a wood recycler. If you have enough appropriate  $\frac{3}{4}$ " unfinished solid wood left over from a flooring project we can probably use it!

While these woods are chosen for their stability in both wet and sunny environments, wood is still a "living" entity that changes on a daily basis. We use tongue and groove construction to minimize warping. Each plank comes from a different part of the tree or from different trees, so each will have its own "life." Ipe, one of the longest lasting woods, is especially hard, fibrous, and difficult to work.

I have engineered our proprietary aluminum legs and specifically to handle the dimensional changes that wood undergoes as it swells in humid environments and shrinks in dry or sunny locations. It is the design of the leg that channels the power wood exerts when it expands absorbing water, which is the same force that causes the rapid deterioration of wood planters that use screwed, bolted, or nailed construction. Stone has been quarried for centuries by wetting wood dowels and using the woods expansive strength cracking off huge blocks. You can also think of buckled wood floor. To fit the leg, the wood has to be machined using high-speed carbide cutters and scoring; however, wood can still chip where it has been machined at 90° angles leaving minor cosmetic chips, especially in Ipe.

Even though we handcraft these planters in humid Miami, you may find that the top plank swells upwards over the top of the leg when exposed to rain. This is normal, but you may modify it easily if you like. We urge you to wait until the wood has seasoned and stabilized over time before doing so, as you may find it shrinks back during the dry season. The easiest way we have found to plane the wood down is to use an inexpensive Microplane® or Sureform® rasp available at any hardware store. Carefully plane the top edge down to almost flush before finishing with 120-grit sandpaper. If you want to make the wood absolutely flush, you must remove the plank from the leg to avoid damaging the leg by simply removing two fasteners, but with every change in the weather it will continue to shrink or grow.

Occasionally a plank may split over time and, while this is not a material defect, nor will it reduce the planter strength, if it diminishes the aesthetic appeal for you, call us with the exact measurement between the legs, accurate to 1/64", and we can supply a replacement plank that can be inserted in our modular design.

Even without any protective finish, tropical hardwoods may last decades. Our planter design eliminates contact between the wood and wet dirt or standing water. These woods are photo-reactive and change color with exposure to the elements.

Even with treated wood, water will wash out red color from wood and leave stains for the first few weeks. Although rain and sun will eliminate these stains Phosphoric acid will remove the stains quickly and easily from pavers, cement, and porcelain tile, but will quickly eat into the anodizing on the aluminum legs. So move the planters first and use care. Use MEK early and often in the initial months to prevent stains on the aluminum.

Just as with teak, other woods will go "grey" in time if not sealed, and the planks will take on a more uniform appearance. Sealer will darken the wood while adding protective oils to minimize water and sun fading. Your planter has been finished with *Ipe Oil* or *Thompsons Waterproofing Plus*, which includes sunscreen and waterproofing that will extend the already long life of your wood.

For refinishing advice and more information on alternative waterproofing and UV filters see one of the following articles:

[Mariner Planter Care Instructions](#)

[Wood Finish Options](#)

[www.deckstainhelp.com/what-is-the-best-deck-stain/](http://www.deckstainhelp.com/what-is-the-best-deck-stain/)

[Refinishing Wood: Pressure Washing](#)

[Refinishing Wood: Sanding](#)