



Maple Flooring Manufacturers Association

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"Hard" Maple vs. "Soft" Maple

"Hard maple" is the common term for two species of maple trees: Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) and Black Maple (*Acer nigrum*). Hard maple is commonly used in the manufacture of flooring, furniture, cabinets, billiard cues, and other finished wood products. "Soft maple" is the common term for four species of maple trees: Silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), Red maple (*Acer rubrum*), Boxelder (*Acer negundo*), and Bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*). Soft maple is commonly used for railroad crossties, boxes, pallets, crates, furniture, veneer, wooden ware and novelties. The flesh of soft maple trees -- in particular silver and red maple -- resembles that of hard maple, but is not as heavy, hard, or strong.

All MFMA maple flooring is manufactured exclusively from Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*). This hardwood is the best type of maple for flooring due to the unique characteristics of this wood species. Characteristics that make *Acer saccharum* perfect for MFMA flooring include fine and uniform texture, straight grain, resistance to shock, hardness and strength, resistance to dents and scratches, and stiffness.

For additional detailed information, consult the following sources:

- *Wood Handbook: Wood as an Engineering Material*; U.S.D.A., 1999
- *U.S.D.A. Forest Products Laboratory General Technical Report FPL-GTR-113*
- U.S. Forest Products Society Catalogue Number 7269
- U.S. Forest Products Society
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wisconsin

If you have any additional questions, please contact MFMA's Technical Director at 847/480-9138.

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