

The Best-Kept Secret for Your Home's Exterior

Unique versatility, unrivaled durability, breathtaking beauty—all are qualities that have made cypress a longtime favorite building material in the coastal regions of the South. But the secret about cypress is out, and homeowners across the country are acknowledging its virtues for upgrading their homes' curb appeal and outdoor living spaces.

"We are seeing more cypress being used in a wide range of exterior applications, from siding and decking to ceilings and even built-in furniture," says Shepard Haggerty, president of the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association, www.CypressInfo.org. "Clearly, homeowners continue to favor the look and feel of wood, and not only does cypress provide long-lasting performance, it has the versatility to be stained or painted to match the style of any home."

Architects side with cypress.

As part of the renovation of his own home, architect Kevin Owen, Winston-Salem, N.C., chose to replace the existing siding, that was in need of repair and a fresh coat of paint.

"My wife and I spent years updating our home's interior, but we saw this as an opportunity to give the outside a different look," he says. "We knew we wanted to use wood siding and ultimately chose cypress. It's locally available, competitively priced, and we especially liked its durability and resistance to insects and decay, which are serious concerns for homes in our area."

As Owen learned, cypress comes by its durability naturally, thanks to a preservative oil produced in cypress heartwood. "It doesn't require pressure treating like some other species," he says. "The cypress gave a warm and organic look to our home. We are very happy with the result."

Architect Ann McKenzie Aiken used cypress siding for a custom home in Chattanooga, Tenn. that she designed several years ago. "This was my first experience working with cypress," she says, "and the homeowners and I were thrilled with the finished project. I have to admit, I've been recommending cypress ever since because other materials just don't seem like they are of the same quality."

Cypress decking floors homeowners and builders.

Compared to alternatives, wood decking is cooler underfoot, can be sanded if scratched, and refinished if dulled by the sun. Those qualities are what attracted homeowners, Dan and Rose Jaeger, to cypress when they added two decks to their house near Akron, Ohio, 12 years ago.



"We like the feel of wood and loved the look of cypress," Dan says. "It also was competitive in price to treated woods, but without the concern over chemicals. We've refinished our decks every three years, and today, through weather, parties, and family fun, they're still performing and looking great."

Custom deck builder John Paulin, owner of Tailor Decks in Statham, Ga., agrees. "That's why I like cypress decking," he says. "It offers magazine-quality looks, provides durability that lasts, and is affordable."

Cypress has outdoor living covered, too.

Paulin says he also recommends cypress for often-overlooked exterior ceilings. "A lot of people with porches put up some plywood, paint it, and forget about it," he explains. "But ceilings add a visual impact to an open-air space. We build a lot of covered porches here in the Atlanta area and I've produced some of my best-looking work, thanks to cypress."

What sets cypress apart, according to Paulin, is the versatility it brings to selecting a finish. "Because cypress is a naturally light-colored wood, it offers a range of options. It'll take a light or dark stain better than most woods, it can be painted or whitewashed, or it can be left in its natural state."

Yes, the secret about cypress is out. Add its versatility, durability and beauty to your next home improvement project. It's what the experts choose.