

Janka

All wood has different characteristics, including appearance, color, grain, texture, and density. Each of these characteristics will influence how wood is used and will perform as a flooring material.

The Janka scale calculates the relative hardness of wood species. This is determined by measuring the force required to embed a .444-inch steel ball to half its diameter into a piece of solid wood. It generally is used to predict the ability of a wood species to withstand denting and wear. The higher the number on the Janka scale, the higher the relative hardness of the species.

Although Janka can be a good indicator of durability, it also is a good indicator of how hard or easy a species will be to nail and/or cut while using it as a flooring material.

Janka ratings do not apply to engineered wood flooring. Due to the many variances in wear layer thickness, core material, and the overall construction of engineered flooring products, the Janka ratings cannot be applied.

Bamboo is not included on the Janka scale due to the many differences among bamboo products. In addition, bamboo technically is a grass, not a wood.

Cork also is not included on the Janka scale. It technically is not wood either; it is made from the bark of the cork tree.

Keep in mind, no two trees from the same species are identical, no two boards from the same tree are identical, and properties can vary even within one individual plank of wood.

More-detailed information about wood flooring species is available in the NWFA Technical Publication A200, Wood Species Used in Wood Flooring, or at https://member.nwfa.org/global_engine/download.asp?fileid=23EAC532-6E99-45D4-AE62-9F63D07C0ECB&ext=pdf.

