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REMILLED MESSMATE FLOORING: DEFECT OR DESIRED FEATURE?

Messmate flooring is remilled from recycled construction timbers. These timbers were installed green or unseasoned as structural joists, beams and purlins, were air-dried over the life of the building, then removed during demolition. Structural hardwoods are backsawn rather than quartersawn and fairly run-of-mill rather than graded for appearance. This means the boards show crown features, irregular colour, gum lines and natural feature instead of the lineal, low-featured and uniform tones of quartersawn timber.

The construction source of recycled hardwoods will determine 'attrition' features. Purlins will have nail, screw or bolt holes; floor joist will show metal marks on one edge. Truss chords will exhibit boltholes, notches and mortise features; ridge boards and ceiling hangers will show clusters of nail holes across the face of the board. Timber may show discoloration close to original surface intensified by oxidation and surface checking (fine shallow furrows or fracture on the surface of air-dried board.) Black carbon staining can halo bolt or nail holes and chisel marks remain where metal fragments have been dug out.

Our grading process is not intended to eliminate these features described above unless they are excessive or affect board integrity. High-feature boards are separated and sold as a falldown grade in unfinished board. Expect most flooring to be about 65% Standard Grade and 35% NFG in appearance - unless otherwise labelled.

Displays of finished flooring and production packs are available for inspection and purchasers should inform themselves in person and prior to purchase, of the nature of the product described here, as no claims will be heard in respect of grade, flaws, colour or visible defect after purchase if they simply mirror these observations.

Messmate or mixed Stringybarks?

Recycled structural timbers are unlikely to come as a single species batch. By convention our *recycled messmate*, has other stringybarks and other coastal forest species in the packs. Silvertop Ash, Yellow Stringybark, Blue-leaf Stringybark, Blackbutt, and Brown Barrel (*E. fastigata*) occur in the mix. None of these is dissimilar in colour and grain and would present a pointless and difficult separation.

By rights, our industry should have adopted a product name that was not species-specific such as *Messmate (Eucalyptus obliqua)*. At the time we were all caught up in an important movement of the early 90s - which was to put these old but unfashionable species names back on the menu for appearance-grade floors and furniture timbers and to lay to rest the cringe euphemisms of the 1930s such as *Oak* or *Ash* applied to native hardwoods. Intent on this new eucalypt nationalism, we didn't think far enough ahead - and the convention became set in concrete.