

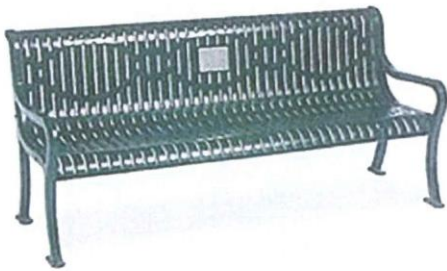
i) **Metal Seating**

Most metals are highly susceptible to rust, however to prevent this, most metal furniture sold in the U.K. is finished with layers of clear varnish, paint, lacquer or a durable powder coating, to add strength and protect the furniture from the elements.

If any metal furniture is left out in the elements, as is the case with a park bench, it is recommended that the seats are cleaned and maintained at regular intervals. Generally, most metal seating can be cleaned by simply using a little mild washing up liquid in a bucket of warm water, however, problems tend to occur when the seats are chipped/ vandalised and the protective coating is damaged, in which case an immediate repair will be required and special paint/ lacquer will need to be administered.

Most metal benches tend to be more contemporary in style and can of course be painted to a corporate colour if required. A Contemporary design however, would not be as suitable for a memorial bench.

Prices range from £150 - £900.



ii) **Wooden Benches**

The most durable wood for outdoor use, industry accepted, is Teak. Teak is a tropical hardwood that has a leather-like smell when it is freshly milled and is particularly valued for its durability and water resistance. The wood is easily worked, and has natural oils that make it suitable for use in exposed locations, where it is durable even when not treated with oils or varnish. It is common for a teak bench, chair or table to last in excess of 50 years standing out in the elements, which is why it tends to be the standard material used for most memorial benches.

Teak does not need to be protected. It is a unique wood that if left in its natural state, is virtually maintenance-free. If left untreated, as with most timbers, the process of oxidation (Nature's way of protecting the timber) will begin. The colour of the wood will start to fade from a light brown, to a pale white, and then finally to a silver colour. The time scale for this process will vary from bench to bench and the environment in which the bench is situated. This is a natural process, and will not affect the strength, performance or life expectancy of the bench. The oxidised layer can be gently sanded back or chemically cleaned to reveal the unprotected, bare Teak timber beneath, if this is required. However, this is a process that would have to be done at regular intervals and would involve additional man hours and/or a specialist cleaner.

Teak wood, as you would expect, is generally more expensive than most other woods. Price range from £300 - £1300.

Other woods commonly used in the manufacture of outdoor furniture, include Iroko, Oak, Eucalyptus, Chestnut, Mahogany and Pine. Some are more durable than others, and most would need to be treated.

To prevent staining, aging and discolouring, it is recommended that teak oil be used as a protective measure to repel water and shield the wood from sun and weather. This should be administered twice a year, preferably in Spring and Autumn.

Less durable woods tend to be slightly cheaper, however will cost slightly more to maintain. Prices for other hardwood benches range from £119 - £600.

The beauty of a wood bench is in the heritage and classic design. The wood can easily be engraved, or a plaque added for a dedication message.



TIMBER DURABILITY CHART

Class Five - Non Durable
(Less than 5 years)

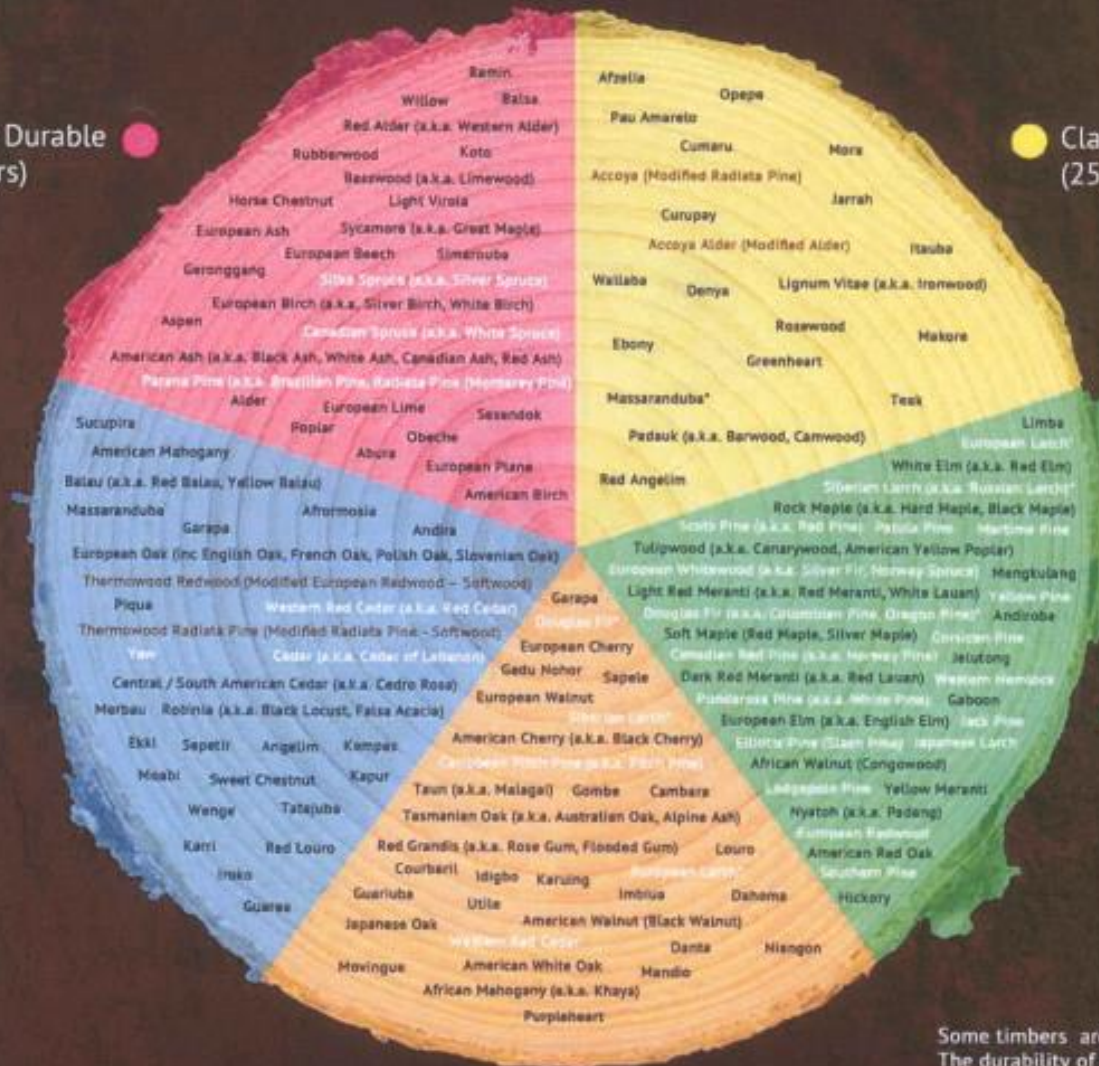
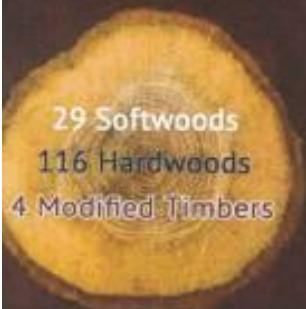
Class One - Very Durable
(25 years+)

Class Two - Durable
(15 to 25 years)

Class Four - Slightly Durable
(5 to 10 years)

Class Three - Moderately Durable (10 to 15 years)

Some timbers are listed in more than one Durability Class. The durability of these timbers is affected by where they grow.



WOOD TREATMENT- GENERAL INFORMATION

If wood is properly treated and cared for, it can withstand exposure to rain, sleet, snow, and sunlight. Some kinds of outdoor furniture require more care than others. Cedar, chinese fir, oak, acacia, shorea balau and teak wood furniture are often chosen for their durability and ease of upkeep. Teak and eucalyptus wood furniture have a natural resistance to decay and insects, while oak, chinese fir, shorea balau, acacia and cedar contain natural chemicals in the heart of the wood that make them tough and long-lasting.

The best time to treat outdoor furniture is during warm, dry weather, so plan your cleaning, oiling and refinishing for the late spring or summer.

information

1. Clean your outdoor furniture with warm soapy water and a clean cloth. Rinse thoroughly and dry with a soft terrycloth towel. Allow your furniture to air dry for at least 24 hours before applying any sealers or oil.
2. Remove outdoor cooking soot from blackened wood furniture with a mixture of one cup of trisodium phosphate and one gallon of warm water. Scrub well with a soft bristled brush, rinsing afterwards with cool water.
3. Examine your furniture after it has dried for cracks and flaking; lightly sand any areas of deterioration with fine grade sandpaper. Treated wood should be stripped completely with a varnish remover before refinishing.
4. Oil wood once or twice yearly. Apply with a clean paintbrush and wipe off excess oil with a soft absorbent cloth.
5. Restore treated woods with a sealer that contains a mildew inhibitor and wood preservative. This will slow down the aging process and help keep mould at bay.
6. Replace any rusted hardware such as screws, fasteners and bolts to avoid staining the wood. Always use a silicone-based lubricant when oiling wheels or hinges, as those with oil bases will attract a grimy residue.
7. Protect your furniture by covering with vinyl furniture covers at night. During the winter, you may want to bring the wooden pieces indoors for storage. If this is not possible, cover it during the winter season with the vinyl covers.

Handy hint - For stained wood, apply a stain that contains a water-repellent preservative or apply a sealant after it is dry. For paint, make sure all the old paint has been removed before applying a new coat or staining.

EUCALYPTUS WOOD

Eucalyptus wood is a sturdy wood that is an effective alternative to teak and other hardwoods. It is resistant to water, disease and insects, which makes it ideal for use as patio furniture. It does require some care, however, to stay in excellent condition. To keep your outdoor eucalyptus wood furniture looking good, follow these instructions:

1. Scrub the surface of the wood, using a soft bristle brush, once or twice a year with a solution of 1 tbsp. bleach, 5 tbsp. dish soap and 1 gallon of water. Dry the wood with old towels. This removes any residue from the wood and kills any mould or mildew spores.
2. Paint the surface of unsealed wood with a thin coat of polyurethane sealer. Allow the sealer to dry for two hours, then apply another coat. Apply a total of three coats. Allow the wood to dry completely between applications. This will help the wood resist water damage and protect it from scratches, stains, nicks and weathering.
3. Prevent further damage to the wood by keeping hot objects, such as hot plates and cooking dishes, off the surface. Wipe spills immediately with a dry towel.
4. Although eucalyptus is moisture-resistant, all wood eventually is ruined by moisture, so cover the furniture when it's not in use. Protect your furniture by covering with vinyl furniture covers at night. During the winter, you may want to bring the wooden pieces indoors for storage. If this is not possible, cover it during the winter season with the vinyl covers. Cover your furniture properly. You should pull the cover tightly over every piece of furniture and then tuck it underneath the legs of all the chairs and tables to make sure moisture doesn't saturate into them or cover the bottom of the furniture legs with rubber shoes to protect the bottom of the wood from rotting.

Tip - Make sure to keep your wood furniture free of standing water. Don't leave pieces standing in water or let chairs fill with water during rainstorms.



iii) Recycled Plastic Benches

Recycled plastic benches are an eco-friendly alternative that is 100% impervious to insects, water, frost, fungi and algae. Modern recycled plastic is low maintenance, weatherproof, safe and designed to deal with the most demanding environments.

Recycled plastic has a strong and natural moisture barrier against the harsh outdoor elements and is also very difficult to damage. Studies show that it will last at least five times longer than treated wood timber. It can also come in a range of different colours.

Due to durability and longevity and their eco-friendly appeal, recycled plastic benches can make a fitting memorial choice. The benches can be engraved with a loving message or a memorial plaque added without it sticking out from the surface.

Prices range from £200 - £750.

