
Subject: What's the deal with Baltic Birch plywood?

Posted by [lon](#) on Mon, 16 Aug 2004 03:32:38 GMT

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I noticed that the Baltic Birch plywood I got in handy panels (so I could transport them) wound up with a significant amount of voids after cutting. I thought this stuff was supposed to be void-free. What's the deal? My little whiskey box style nearfields using Tangband w3-871 Sesare finally together. I don't have a lot good to say about how the butt joints turned out either. But there was a lot of stuff to learn on a first project. I guess you could call these the 'rustic' look. Oh yeah.:o)

Subject: Re: What's the deal with Baltic Birch plywood?

Posted by [wunhuanglo](#) on Tue, 17 Aug 2004 00:07:17 GMT

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I don't know what handy panels are, but Baltic Birch / Finnish Birch / Russian Birch are most assuredly void free. If you're in the US and went to someplace like Home Depot or Lowe's you bought birch veneer plywood, but that is far from the product known as Finnish or Baltic Birch. I saw some birch veneer plywood in Lowe's recently that was actually lumber-core (what lumber is anybody's guess). I believe 18 mm (3/4" stock) has 13 plies (1.4 mm each).

Subject: Re: What's the deal with Baltic Birch plywood?

Posted by [lon](#) on Tue, 17 Aug 2004 00:20:22 GMT

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Yes, the Home Depot was my point of purchase. I haven't been to Finland. Handy panels are 4x8's cut down to 2x4 ft. They are handier to carry. My next project hopefully will be a Voigt pipe in pine if I can find some without knots. I am making some test boxes for Fostex FE27e in a MLTL design in between things.

Subject: Re: What's the deal with Baltic Birch plywood?

Posted by [Bill Martinelli](#) on Tue, 17 Aug 2004 00:48:53 GMT

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I don't think HD sells Baltic. Have not noticed any at the stores I've been to at least. Look for a distributor in your area for Appleply. An American version of Birch and Alder combination. can be had in 4x8 sheets instead of the traditional baltic 5x5. Bill
States Industries Appleply

Subject: Re: What's the deal with Baltic Birch plywood?
Posted by [wunhuanglo](#) on Tue, 17 Aug 2004 02:34:23 GMT
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I've been in a few Home Depot stores - Maine, New Hampshire, Virginia, Massachusetts, Louisiana, Texas and Puerto Rico. I think that's a good enough sample for me to assure you that you didn't get Baltic Birch. Actually, I read recently Home Depot is trying to settle all kinds of problems with South American countries where they source most of their plywood. The stuff they import is really, exceptionally poor. I buy it all the time because it's convenient, but it offers nothing else. They sell something they call "sanded plywood". The face veneers look really great, A-A. When you cut it or run a router into it little islands within the wood catch fire. Little embers. Weird. Sometimes they fly out of the cut glowing like you were at a grinding wheel. You can buy 20 X 30 pieces and larger of Finnish or Baltic birch on the internet - Do a Google search. They will want to cut it to facilitate shipping. The full panels are 60" X 60" so the cut pieces will be multiples of those dimensions. If you want to do something economical with solid wood try poplar. Really stinks (to me at least) when you cut it but it certainly is beautiful stuff to work with. Trying finishing it with some milk paint. White Pine and similar softwood is actually some of the hardest wood to work with. You need incredibly sharp tools to cut it cleanly, and keeping a sharp molded or square edge is nearly impossible.

Subject: Re: What's the deal with Baltic Birch plywood?
Posted by [lon](#) on Tue, 17 Aug 2004 13:36:50 GMT
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That stuff at The Depot must have been plain birch ply rather than Baltic or Finnish. I'm going to have to get out the phone book and look for a real lumber yard to get some board stock. The Poplar is a good suggestion.

Subject: Re: poplar
Posted by [wunhuanglo](#) on Tue, 17 Aug 2004 22:22:11 GMT
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Actually, the poplar at the local HD is VERY nice stuff. They must really take care in drying it - die rule straight. No warp or wind at all.

Subject: We have them up here at Home Depot
Posted by [GarMan](#) on Tue, 17 Aug 2004 23:01:49 GMT
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11 plies in 17mm and they're very nice. And expensive too at close to \$20(Cdn) for 2x4 pieces.

Subject: Please don't be insulted by this...
Posted by [wunhuanglo](#) on Wed, 18 Aug 2004 06:37:14 GMT
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but I really think that's highly unlikely, if only for the reason that the size doesn't correspond to standard for the product. It's invariably 60" X 60" (or whatever the metric equivalent is). Cutting 2 X 4 panels from 5 X 5 panels just isn't practical. Also, 11 plies isn't consistent with the 13 ply standard, the only way I've ever seen it. I just went and looked at a piece of 1/2" Baltic Birch to see if I was remembering incorrectly - it has 9 plies, which sort of confirms my memory of 13 plies for 3/4". The price (\$80 Cdn per sheet, for partial sheets) is equivalent to about \$61 USD per sheet, \$15 USD per quarter sheet. That's roughly what they charge for their "cabinet grade" birch veneer plywood here. 3/4" - 18 or 19 mm Baltic birch here is also around \$60 per sheet. But that's \$60 for 25 Sq Ft, vs 32 Sq Ft for "ordinary" plywood. If the comparison holds up, you ought to be paying even more than you are for Baltic Birch.

Subject: Re: Please don't be insulted by this...
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Wed, 18 Aug 2004 15:45:15 GMT
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Just checked the local HD for Baltic birch veneer ply; it does stock the Baltic variety. What it does carry, however, is 3/4" 11 ply sheets in 2' x 4' for around \$14. The cross section shows inconsistent quality of wood used. It seems every other layer is of lower quality "wood" with many voids.....Colin

Subject: Re: poplar
Posted by [lon](#) on Wed, 18 Aug 2004 18:37:52 GMT
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Unlikely that it's bought locally unless you are in "Poplar Country." I'll take a look.

Subject: Re: Please don't be insulted by this...
Posted by [lon](#) on Wed, 18 Aug 2004 18:43:23 GMT

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That's the same as my experience with HD BB. Face is nicely figured but plies are full of voids, some sorta deep.

Subject: Should be "does NOT stock Baltic variety"
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Wed, 18 Aug 2004 19:27:39 GMT
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Local HD stocks birch ply - NOT of the Baltic variety.....Sorry

Subject: Re: Snarf up that lumber core!
Posted by [The Auntie-Polly](#) on Thu, 19 Aug 2004 01:45:11 GMT
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It's not as dimensionally stable as veneer core but no voids. Kinda like the old timers veneering solid mahogany with Walnut. The core is prob Alder. Not bad. Every town, even Appleton and those in the Great White North, eh Hoser?, have a plastic laminate distributor. Ya know, Formica, Wilson Art, maybe even Domtar, eh? Those same distributors which cater to contractors and cabinet shops always sell cabinet hardware and hardwood plywood. One of them will have Baltic, Roosian or Finnish Birch. And Apple Ply. And 3/4 A/B Maple, Oak, Walnut and other species of hardwoods. Expect to pay \$110 to \$150 a 4x8. Check the 'Pages Jaune' for 'plastic laminate', cabinet hardware or hardwood lumber.
