

Natural Characteristics of Wood



Characteristics Definitions



- **SAPWOOD:** The living wood of lighter color occurring in the outer portion of a tree, sometimes referred to as sap.



- **CROSS BAR (FIGURE):** Irregularity of grain resembling a dip in the grain running at right angles, or nearly so, to the length of the veneer.



- **HEARTWOOD:** The non-active or dormant center of a tree, generally distinguishable from the outer portion (sapwood) by its darker color, sometime referred to as heart.

Characteristics Definitions



- **WORM TRACKS:** Marks caused by various types of wood attacking larvae. Often appear as sound discolorations running with or across the grain in straight to wavy streaks.



- **GUM SPOTS AND STREAKS:** Gum or resinous material or color spots and streaks caused by prior resin accumulations sometimes found on panel surfaces.



- **BURL:** A swirl, twist, or distortion in the grain of the wood which usually occurs near a knot or crotch but does not contain a knot and does not contain abrupt color variation.

Characteristics Definitions



- **FLECK (FLAKE):** Portion of a ray as it appears on the quartered or rift-cut surface. Fleck is often a dominant appearance feature in oak.



- **STREAKS, MINERAL:** Sharply contrasting elongated discolorations of the wood substance.



- **KNOTS:** Cross section of tree branch or limb with grain usually running at right angles to that of the piece of wood in which it occurs.

Characteristics Definitions



- **SPLITS:** Separations of wood fiber running parallel to the grain.

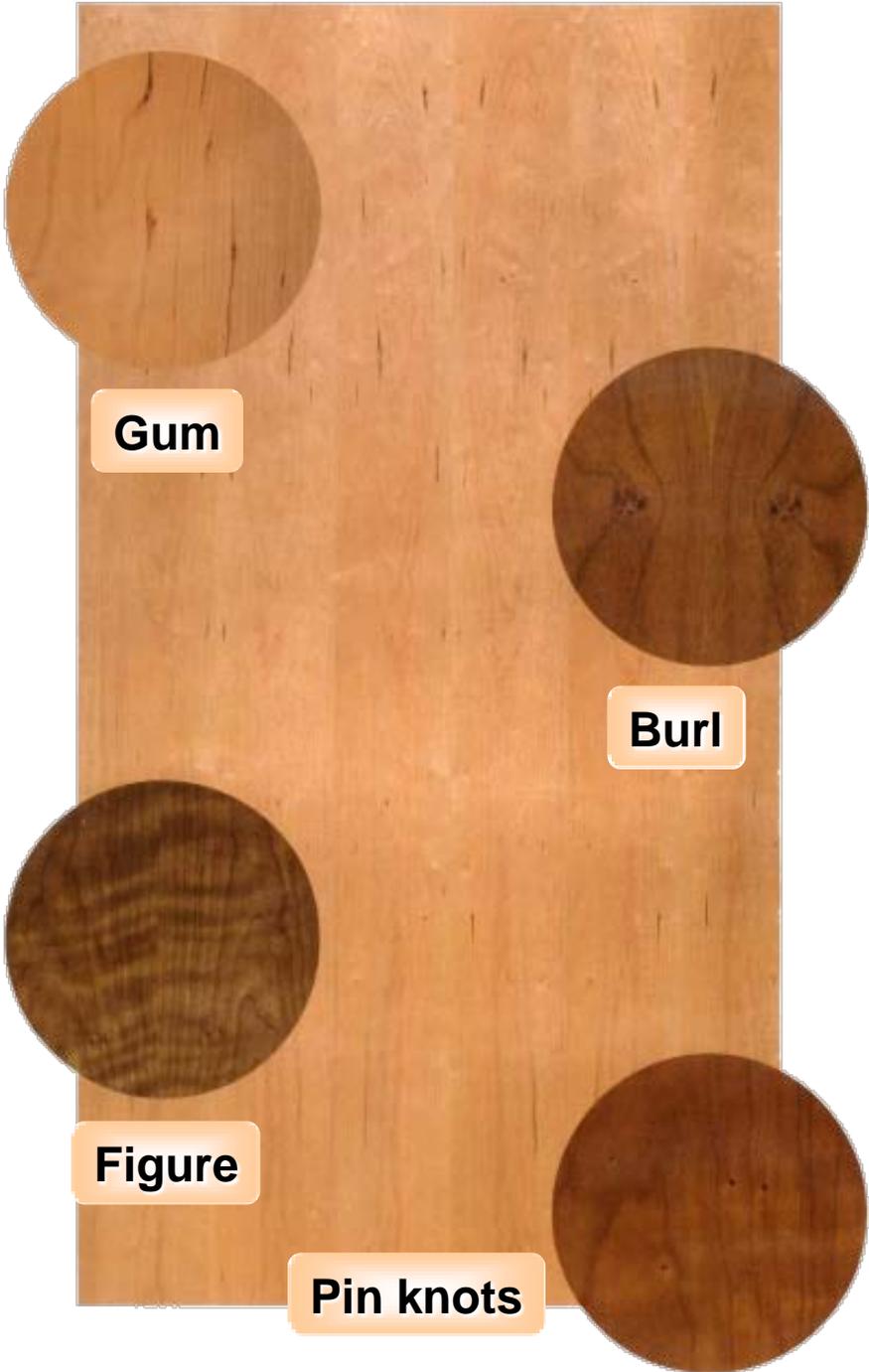


- **BARK POCKET:** Bark around which normal wood has grown.

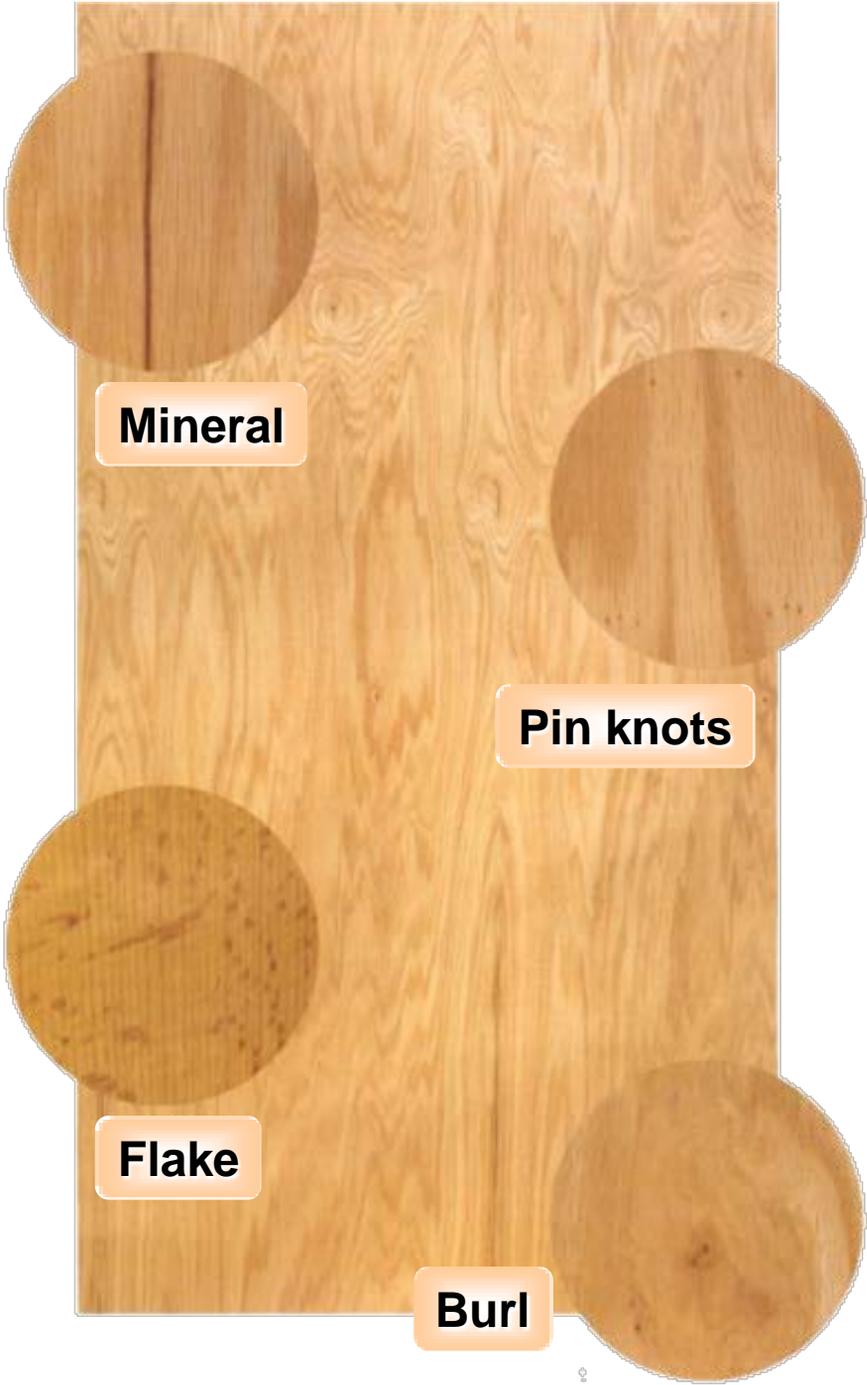


- **PIN KNOTS:** Sound knots 6.4 mm (1/4 inch) or less in diameter containing dark centers.

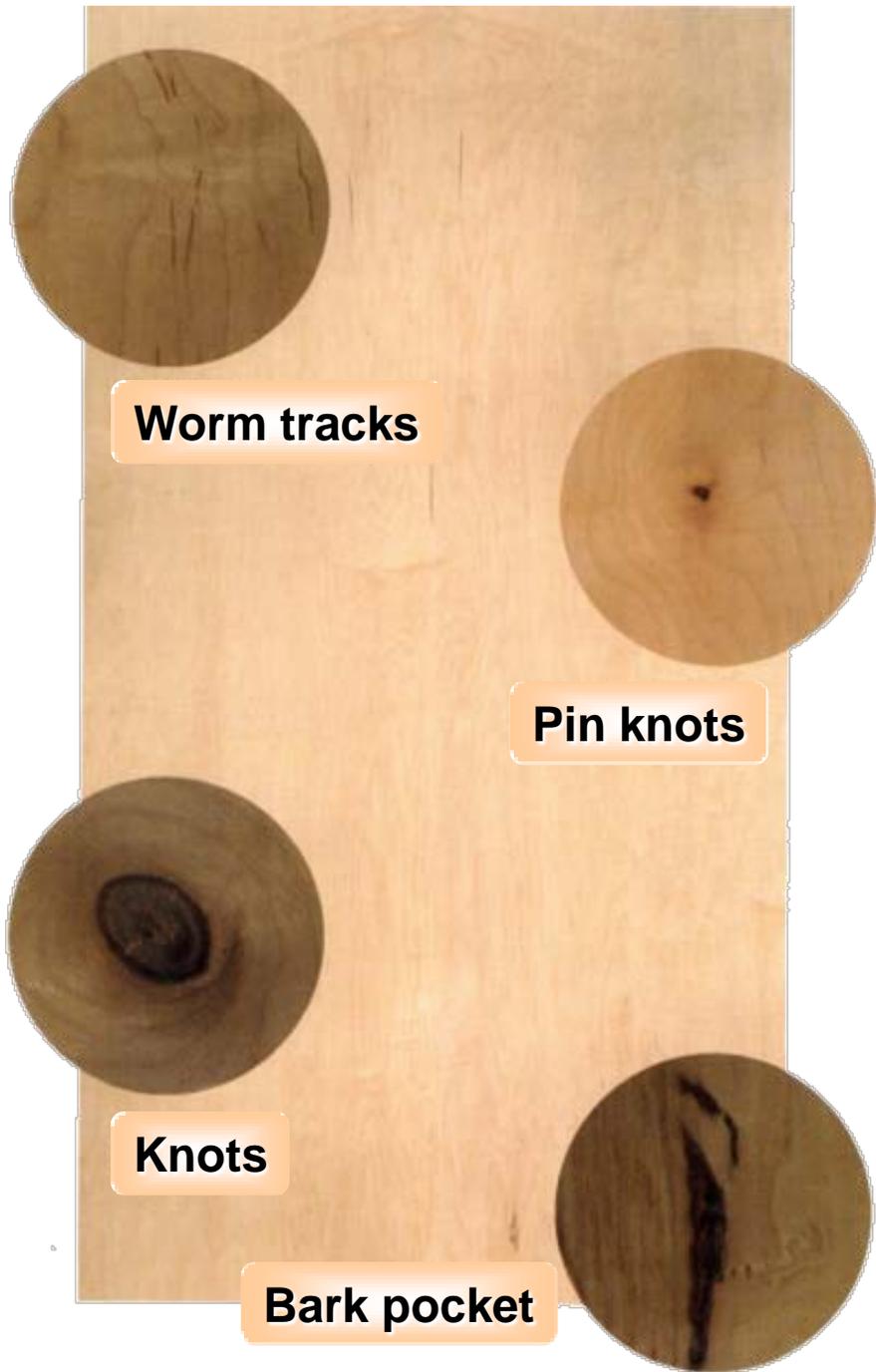
Natural Characteristics of Cherry



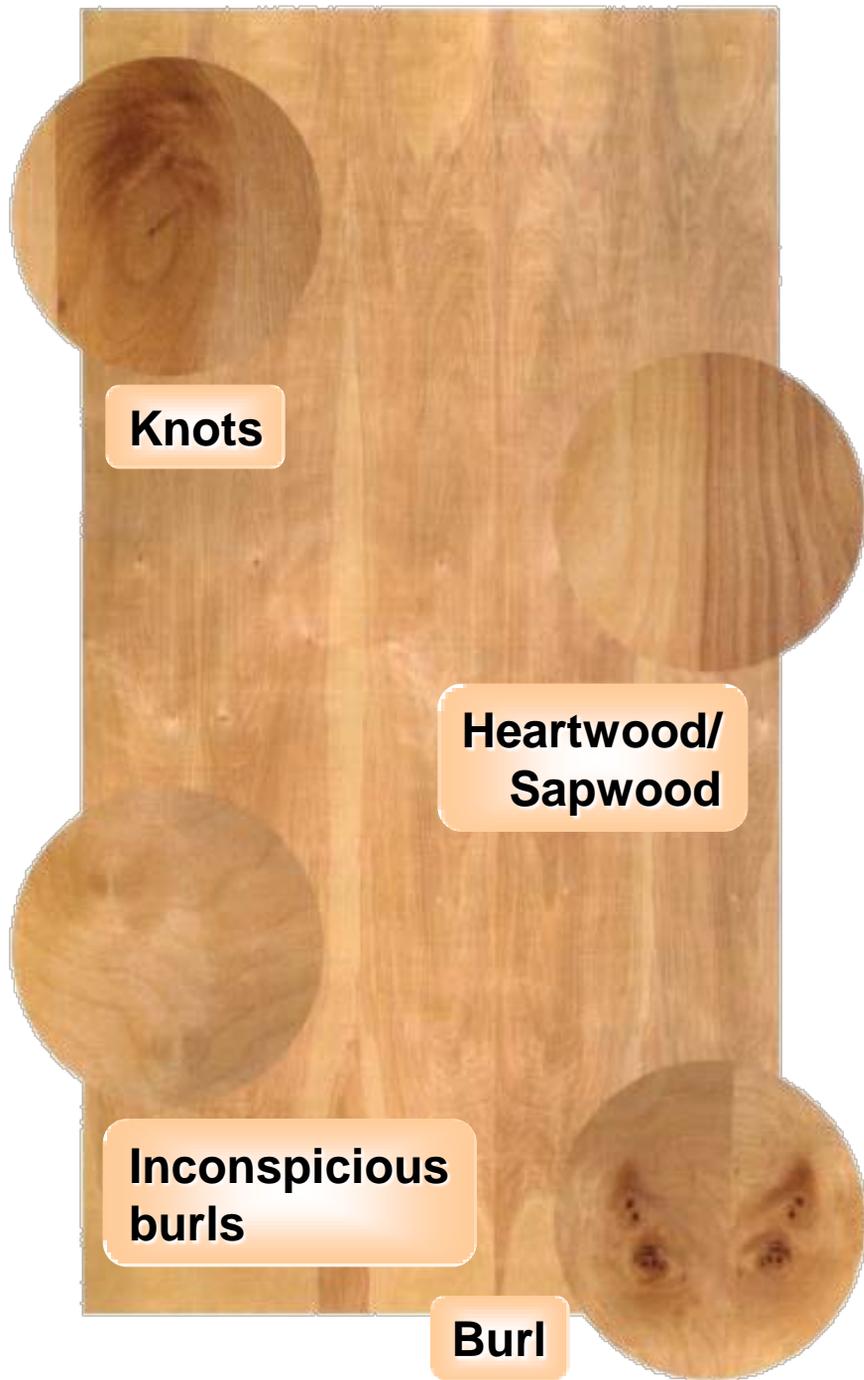
Natural Characteristics of Red Oak



Natural Characteristics of Maple



Natural Characteristics of Birch



The Beauty is in the Variation

Nature signs every tree with its own fingerprints. Its reflects the region and terrain where each tree grows and the weather each tree experiences during its many growth cycles. These influences are seen in there grain and pattern of each piece of wood.

In some cases, certain trees have characteristics that are unique to the species. Take cherry trees for example. Cherry solids and veneers have small indentations, knows as “gum pockets”, which are inherent in the wood and testify to its quality and authenticity.

Other times, logs are cut to highlight certain characteristics in the wood. Flaky oak solids and veneer gained popularity during the arts and crafts movement because they gave the wood greater dimension and visual beauty. Logs are cut into quarters, then sliced at a precise angle to highlights the oak grain. This specialized process results in some variations in the finish.

As you look at wood furniture, remember that the beauty of a natural product is its one-of-a-kind character.

So, enjoy it for its beauty. Enjoy it for its nature.

