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DISCOVER ALDER: AN ECONOMICAL AND RELIABLE STAND-IN FOR SOFT MAPLE

In a market where Soft Maple's cost and availability can be erratic, Alder stands out as a dependable, economically sound alternative. It mirrors the workability and aesthetic qualities of Soft Maple, making it an ideal choice for manufacturers concerned with material expense, supply and grade consistency. Whether for cabinetry, furniture, or millwork, Alder ensures an effortless transition across a wide range of applications.

Overview of Soft Maple

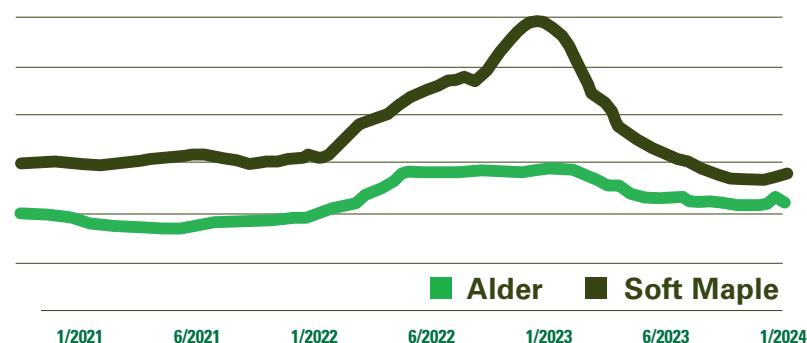
Soft Maple is chosen in furniture-making and architectural millwork for its smooth texture and elegant finish, with colors ranging from pale cream to muted reddish-brown. It offers a desirable balance of durability and pliability. However, its price and availability can fluctuate due to market pressures, making it less predictable for businesses that require stable material supplies.

Overview of Alder

Alder provides a cost-stable alternative to Soft Maple with similar texture and finishing properties. Its consistent color ranges from honey to reddish-brown, featuring a subtle fine grain pattern. Alder's durability makes it suitable for various applications, and its stable price and availability are among its many benefits, ensuring a reliable supply for manufacturers.

Price Trends

NWH weighted average of grades and thicknesses



*Photo courtesy of Crystal Cabinets,
Designed by Terry Stefanoudakis*

Alder

Soft Maple



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ALDER COMPARED TO SOFT MAPLE



Alder



Soft Maple

Texture and Finishing:

Both woods have a fine grain and texture that accept stains and finishes with ease, allowing for versatile design options.

Painting:

Soft Maple tends to develop 'checking' in the heartwood once painted, which does not happen with Alder.

Color and Aesthetics:

Alder is a warm tan color with a fine grain, while Soft Maple ranges from creamy white sapwood to tan/brown heartwood when not selected for color. Alder has a warm color palette making it visually appealing for a variety of projects.

Machinability:

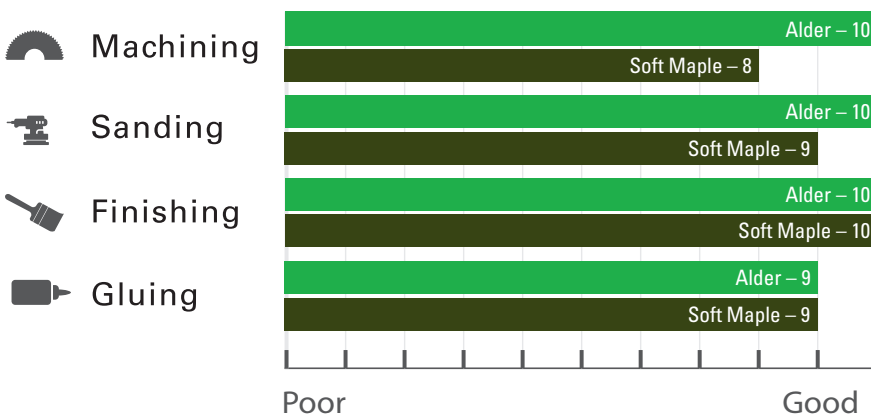
Alder is easy to machine, processing faster than Soft Maple, though it's less durable. Their similar densities allow Alder to be worked with the same tools and techniques as Soft Maple, maintaining production efficiency.

Species Comparison Data

Lumber (12% Moisture Content)	Weight per bdft	Specific Gravity (Density)	Hardness (Janka)	Bending Strength (MOR)	Bending Stiffness (MOE)	Dimensional Movement (Shrinkage)	
						R (%)	T (%)
Alder	2.45	.41	590	9800	1380	4.4	7.3
Soft Maple	3.19	.55	950	13400	1640	4.0	8.2

Source - Wood Database

Species Comparison Chart



Alder Grades at a Glance

Alder Upper Grades

For longer/wider clear cuttings used in case goods, cabinets, furniture and millwork.

Alder Mid Grades

Used when clear shorter/narrower pieces are needed. Stiles and rails, face frames, drawer fronts.

Alder Low Grades

Good for short narrow pieces that can be finger jointed into panels or used for rustic applications.