

Ted's News

April 2018

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[Avoid Trip Hazards in Long Span Decks](#)



One of my regular readers went out for a morning run one day but his day was spoiled when he tripped as he went over a footbridge, obviously not one of mine. There was a trip hazard on the narrow deck where the boards spanned across between the two girders as one board had bowed upwards and one downwards. Two years later the local council finally got around to making the bridge safe and installed a new deck. We mustn't rush safety issues. The only problem is that trip hazard is worse than before. I measured it and there was 11 mm difference in level in places. This is clearly unacceptable and dangerous.

The span of the decking was 900 mm and the decking was 145x45 mm. Now, our Deckwood of that size would span that far but do you do it just the same? If the timber is to grade, but at the limit as far as straightness is concerned, you can have a trip hazard at 800 mm depending on how the

bow is aligned. So in my Deckwood Selection Guide I say don't span beyond 800 mm but, irrespective of permissible span, all decking should be supported at three points minimum irrespective of how far it can span. What this deck should have had is a 75x75 distributer up the centre to tie it all together.

[Have you downloaded the free guide yet?](#) Mind you specifying Deckwood is one thing, getting it from the lowest priced tenderer is another matter. That is why I urge independent verification of grade conformance and I can assist with this. I have seen up to 50% failure. Reputable suppliers need your protection. There is some dreadful timber on this deck.

If you are designing a footbridge with any timber elements [you need my two books on the subject](#). They are Timber footbridges for \$50 and Light Bridge Manual for \$22.

[Are Your Decks Self-cleaning?](#)



Have you purchased my book, [The Seven Deadly Sins Of External Timber Design?](#) The question remains, "Why not", as it addresses most the problems that keep recurring time after time after time. Its only \$22 it won't break the budget and keeps me fed. I will give you an insight into Deadly Sin No 1 - Not having a self-cleaning deck. There are two components to this, the first is by using the Deckwood profile which allows leaf litter to fall through and has maximum ventilation at the deck/joist interface. The second is by not bolting your kerb direct to the deck. In the first image this was also done and the builder has got away with it mainly because of constant droughts which have meant that there has been little moisture to deal with. But not with the image above. My

suggestion is for a 75x75 kerb spaced above the deck by 75mm. This should meet the wheelchair requirements of the disability code. Leaf litter gets away and moisture is not trapped.

Another Failed Plastic Deck



One of my regular readers shared some images with me of the third commercial plastic deck that their company is replacing with spotted gum. It was grooved to take a side concealed fixing and it failed there. The third image is from a different deck they replaced. I am here to help you bring in

an exceptional deck that will age gracefully and with minimum maintenance. Before you believe the hype ask for my university testing of composites, it will shock you.

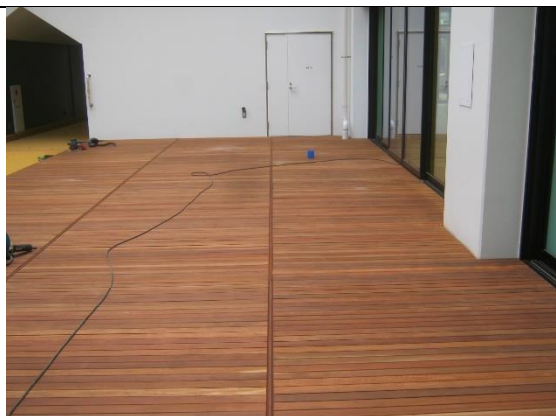
Kurata Co in Japan Excels with Spotted Gum



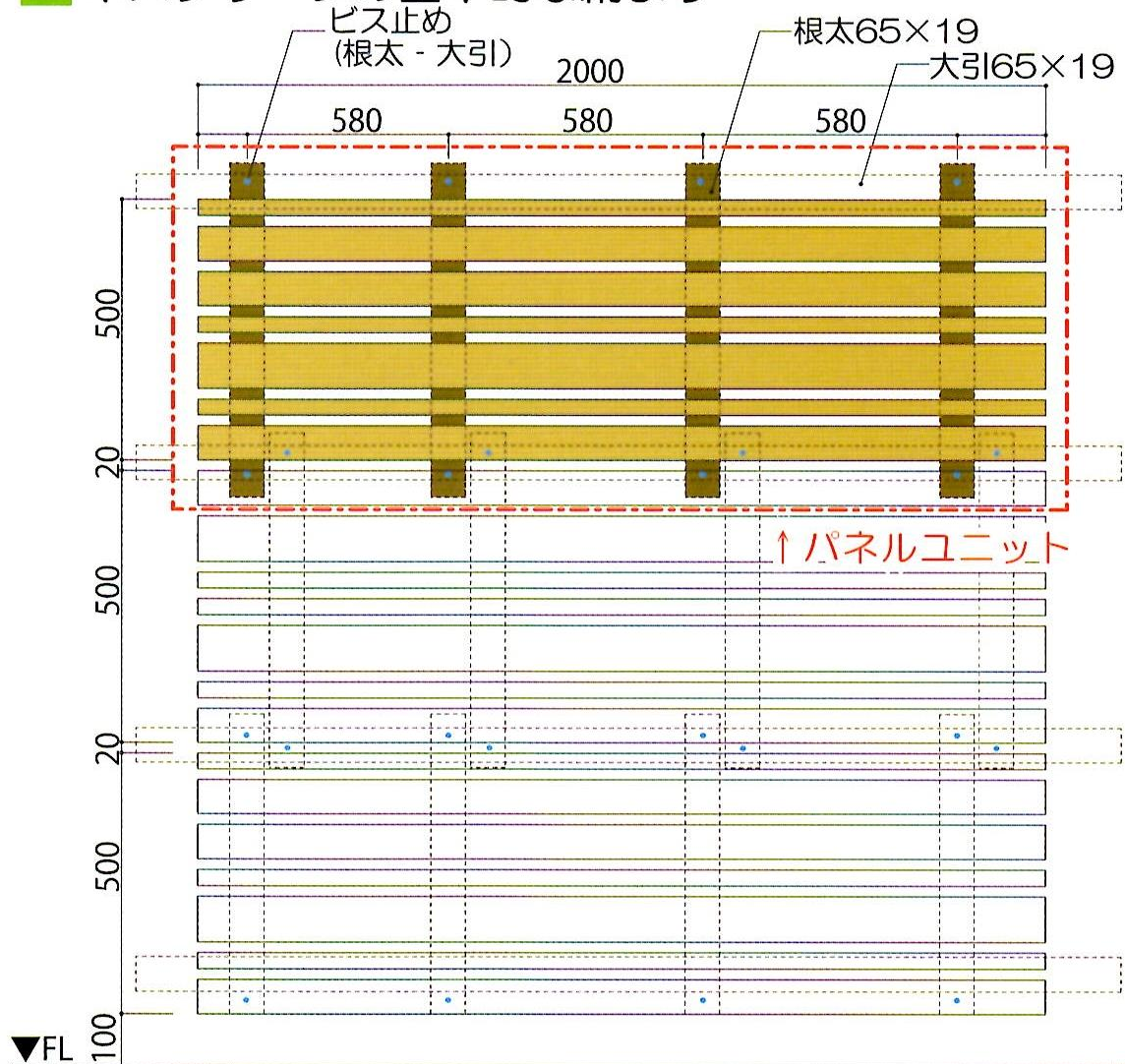
I have had a long friendship with Kurata Co in Japan, first through the founder, Mr Kurata and now continuing with his very able daughter Aki. This month I was pleased to host her at our home along with Claus Jehne of Japancom and have the opportunity to discuss her recent projects in Japan. Here I am with Aki San on my front verandah. Yes, I do live in a timber house. (incidentally, the decking is ironbark and the handrails are spotted gum as are the weatherboards they are 26 years old and in great shape).



Aki told me about a project they had recently completed in Japan, The Saitama Prefecture Children and Family Welfare Centre (Saitama is west of Tokyo). Now because of the constant threat of earthquakes, new buildings are robust concrete structures that can easily lack character, even if they are safe. It takes all the architects skill to humanise such a place and how better than with timber and what better timber than spotted gum! Before specialising in external timber, Kurata Co were furniture manufacturers in Shizuoka City, an area renowned for its cabinet making skills and they brought all their skills to this job, accurately measuring and prefabricating the timber lining etc. offsite so the time on site and conflict with other trades was minimised. I will let the images explain the transformation of the building seen above. We could be doing this quality work here in Australia on a regular basis.



■ 木スクリーンの基本的な納まり



For more about this and other truly remarkable spotted gum projects in Japan visit the [Ecowood website](#) and ask why not here? Another project which is equally stunning but very different is [the McLaren Showroom in Tokyo](#).

Need Urgent Help With Images



My book on external timber furniture is almost complete and I am very grateful for input from two experienced designers who have helped me hone the technical aspects of the text. I need help with some images. Do you have examples of:

- Decay under film finish
- Decayed sapwood
- Failed glue joints
- Problems with edges of round tables
- Corner details



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