

Technical Information > Timber Species Database

> Sapele



Entandrophragma cylindricum

Also known as: saplewood (Nigeria),
aboudikro (Ivory Coast), Sapelli (Cameroon)

Wood type	Hardwood
	Listed in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as as VU – Vulnerable: at risk of extinction.
Environmental	Not listed in CITES. Believed available from well-managed sources. Check certification status with suppliers.
Distribution	It is found in the rain forests of West Africa from the Ivory Coast through Ghana and Nigeria to the Cameroons, and it extends eastwards to Uganda and Tanzania
The Tree	A very large tree with cylindrical bole and small or no buttresses. Grows to a height of 45m or more, and a diameter at breast height of 10m or slightly more
The Timber	The sapwood is pale yellow or whitish, the heartwood pinkish when freshly cut, darkening to typical mahogany colour of reddish-brown. Sapele is characterised by a marked and regular stripe, particularly pronounced on quarter-sawn surfaces. Occasionally mottle figure is present, It is fairly close textured, and the grain is interlocked. It is harder and heavier than African mahogany. weighing about 640 kg/m ³ when dried. It has a pronounced cedar-like scent when freshly cut.
Drying	The timber dries rapidly with a marked tendency to distort. Quarter-sawn material is less liable to degrade in drying
Strength	Sapele is much harder than African or American mahogany, and in resistance to indentation, bending strength, stiffness, and resistance to shock loads, is practically equal with English oak
Working Qualities	Medium - Works fairly well with hand and machine tools, but the interlocked grain is often troublesome in planing and moulding, and a reduction of cutting angle to 15° is needed to obtain a good finish. It takes screws and nails well, glues satisfactorily, stains readily, and takes an excellent polish

Durability	Moderately durable
Treatability	Difficult
Moisture Movement	Medium
Density (mean, Kg/m³)	640 ()
Texture	Medium
Availability	Regular
Price	Medium
Use(s)	Exterior joinery, Interior joinery, Veneer, Furniture, Flooring
Colour(s)	Pink/pale red (when freshly cut), Reddish brown (typical mahogany colour)