

Technical Information > Timber Species Database

> Balau



Shorea spp, *Shorea atrinervosa*, *Shorea elliptica*, *Shorea foxworthyi*, *Shorea glauca*, *Shorea laevis*, *Shorea maxwelliana*, *Shorea submontana*, *Shorea guiso*, *Shorea kunstleri*, *Shorea collina*, *Shorea ochrophloia*

Also known as: Yellow balau, red balau

Wood type Hardwood

Introduction The hard, heavy timber species of *Shorea* occurring in South East Asia are grouped under common trade names peculiar to the area. Thus selangan batu is the name used in Sabah, Brunei and Sarawak, while balau is used to describe the heavy Malaysian species.

Many species of *Shorea* appear on the [IUCN Red List](#) of Threatened Species and are classified as:

- Environmental**
- **CR** – Critically Endangered: at very high risk of extinction in the wild
 - **EN** – Endangered: at high risk of extinction in the wild
 - **VU** – Vulnerable: at risk of extinction

Distribution

Selangan batu is produced by several species, principally *S. laevis* and *S. seminis*.
Red selangan batu is principally *S. guiso*.
Balau is generally separated into two types in Malaysia, ie, balau and red balau.
Balau is produced mainly from *Shorea atrinervosa*, *S. elliptica*, *S. foxworthyi*, *S. glauca*, *S. laevis*, *S. maxwelliana* and *S. submontana*.
Red balau is produced mainly from *S. guiso*, *S. kunstleri*, *S. collina*, and *S. ochrophloia*.

The Timber Selangan batu is a yellowish-brown timber with interlocked grain, and a coarse, but even texture. According to species, durable to very durable.

Balau is a yellowish-brown, brown, or reddish-brown timber with interlocked grain, and a moderately fine and even texture. It is classified in Malaysia as being very durable.

Red balau is a purplish-red or dark red-brown timber, with an interlocked grain, and a coarse but even texture. It is classified in Malaysia as being less durable than balau, ie moderately durable.

Red selangan batu (Sabah), and alan, or meraka alan (Saravak and Brunei) are approximately equal in colour and characteristics to red balau.

Strength	All the species mentioned have hard, heavy and strong timbers with strength properties similar to those of greenheart.
Durability	Durable
Treatability	Extremely difficult Moderately easy (Sapwood)
Moisture Movement	Medium
Density (mean, Kg/m³)	980 (Density can vary by 20% or more)
Texture	Medium
Availability	Available at specialist timber merchant
Price	Low
Sizes	Obtainable in large sizes
Use(s)	Heavy structural use, Marine or freshwater construction, Decking
Colour(s)	Reddish brown, Yellow brown
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roger Haydock Ltd www.haydock.co.uk

Structural design data for engineers working to BS5268-2

- [Balau \(Origin: Imported - Strength Grade: HS - Strength Class: D70\)](#)
- [Balau \(Origin: Imported - Strength Grade: HS - Strength Class: Species/grade specific data\)](#)