

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL Many species of shorea appear on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and are classified as:
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
[Information courtesy of Timbmet Ltd]

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 TREE –

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 (Saravvak and Brunei) are approximately equal in colour and characteristics to red balau.

DRYING Difficult to dry, slow drying with a tendency to end split, warping is variable.

STRENGTH All the species mentioned have hard, heavy and strong timbers with strength properties similar to those of greenheart.

WORKING QUALITIES –

Durability	Durable	Chemical Properties	–
Treatability	Extremely difficult Moderately easy (Sapwood)	Colour(s)	Reddish brown, Yellow brown
Moisture Movement	Medium	Use(s)	Heavy structural use, Marine or freshwater construction, Decking.
Density (mean, Kg/m³)	980 (Density can vary by 20% or more)		
Texture	Medium		