

Sapele

Entandrophragma cylindricum

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



WOOD TYPE Hardwood

INTRODUCTION –

ENVIRONMENTAL Listed in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as as VU – Vulnerable: at risk of extinction. Not listed in CITES. Believed available from well-managed sources.

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/m³ 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 inter-locked 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	Chemical Properties	–
Treatability	Difficult	Colour(s)	Pink/pale red (when freshly cut), Reddish brown (typical mahogany colour)
Moisture Movement	Medium	Use(s)	Joinery - Exterior, Joinery - Interior, Furniture, Flooring.
Density (mean, Kg/m³)	640 ()		
Texture	Medium		