

Utile

Entandrophragma utile

Also known as: sipo (Ivory Coast), assié (Cameroon)



WOOD TYPE Hardwood

INTRODUCTION The Fagaceae family includes some fifty species of the genus Quercus, producing the true oaks of North America, but many of these are so small in size or found in such limited quantities that they are of no commercial importance. Some twenty species are important but since it is difficult to distinguish between the wood of individual species it is common practice to group them either as red or white oak. White oak group timbers are characterised by the small, late-wood pores fine and numerous, not easily distinguished without a magnifying glass. Large pores of the heartwood filled with tyloses in heartwood.

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 Utile has a wide natural distribution in tropical Africa. It occurs in the Ivory Coast, in the Cameroons, and in Liberia, Gabon and Uganda. The tree grows chiefly in the moist, deciduous high forest.

THE TREE The tree may be up to 45m tall and 2m in diameter above the base. The bole is straight, cylindrical, and free of buttresses, and may be 21m to 24m long.

THE TIMBER The heartwood and sapwood are distinct; the heartwood is pale pink when freshly cut, darkening on exposure to reddish-brown. It closely resembles the related sapele, both in appearance and properties, but is more open in texture due to the larger pores, and generally lacks the cedar-like odour of sapele. The interlocked grain produces a broad ribbon-stripe, often wider and more irregular than that of sapele. It weighs about 660 kg/m³ when dried.

DRYING Utile dries moderately slowly with a distinct tendency for distortion in the form of twist to occur, and original shakes to extend. In general however, distortion is not severe.

STRENGTH Its strength properties are similar to those of American mahogany.

WORKING QUALITIES Medium - Works rather well, but with a slight blunting effect on cutting edges. A cutting angle of 15° will reduce the tendency for the interlocked grain to tear during planing and moulding. Takes stain and glue well, and polishes well after filling.

Durability	Moderately durable	Chemical Properties	–
Treatability	Extremely difficult	Colour(s)	Reddish brown
Moisture Movement	Medium	Use(s)	Joinery - Exterior, Joinery - Interior, Furniture, Decking
Density (mean, Kg/m³)	660 ()		
Texture	Medium		