

TIMBER SPECIES

American Mahogany – *Swietenia mahogoni*

Wood Appearance

Colour – Sapwood is light pink to yellowish-brown and usually distinct from the heartwood which varies from medium to deep-red brown. The timber darkens on exposure. Some logs produce streaky timber.

Grain – Texture moderately fine; grain straight to wavy or interlocked, often with an attractive figure.

Wood Properties

Density – 530 kg/m³

Durability – Class 3 – Moderately resistant to decay when fully exposed to the weather, clear of the ground and well drained with free air circulation. Not recommended for in-ground use.

Hardness – Soft (rated 5 on a 6 class scale) in relation to indentation and ease of working with hand tools

Identification Features

Sapwood – Light pink and mostly distinct from the heartwood

Heartwood – Pink-brown darkening on exposure to deep red-brown. Plantation grown mahogany will be lighter in colour than timber from original sources.

Texture – Uniform, medium, grain straight

Wood Structure

Vessels – Solitary and radial chains from 2-4. Just visible to the unaided eye. Light and dark coloured vessel deposits present. Vessel lines visible but not over prominent.

Parenchyma – Irregular spaced bands, visible to the unaided eye

Rays – Fine, storied. The ripple marks resulting from storied rays can be used to separate this species from red cedar, a similar timber from the same family.

Other Features

Burning Splinter Test – A match size splinter burns to a white ash.

Figure – Dressed surfaces exhibit figure due to the parenchyma bands.

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