

# Technical Information > Timber Species Database

## > Sapele



*Entandrophragma cylindricum*

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



**Wood type** Hardwood

Listed in the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#) as **VU** – Vulnerable: at risk of extinction.

**Environmental**

Not listed in CITES. Believed available from well-managed sources. Check certification status with suppliers.

**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 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

**The Timber**

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/m<sup>3</sup> 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

**Treatability** ? Difficult

**Moisture Movement** ? Medium

**Density (mean, Kg/m<sup>3</sup>)** ? 640 ( )

**Texture** ? Medium

**Availability** ? Available at specialist timber merchant

**Price** ? Medium

**Use(s)** ? Joinery - Exterior, Joinery - Interior, Furniture, Flooring

**Colour(s)** ? Pink/pale red (when freshly cut), Reddish brown (typical mahogany colour)