



#### Uses

Zebrawood is used in a limited way for veneer, wall paneling, custom furniture, furniture trim, inlay bandings, marquetry, specialty items and turnery. Because of its hardness, it can also be used for skis and tool handles. It is a decorative exotic wood, and as such has only a small following that even knows it exists, but those that do venture to use it, are awed by its dramatic colour banding. It was also used in previous Mercedes Benz Cars.

The extensive use of zebrawood in Prada's flagship Manhattan store in 2002 resulted in protests from environmentalists and a promise from Prada never to use wood from endangered forests again.

#### The tree: Leguminosae family

Zebrawood is distinctive for its zebra like light and dark stripes. The term, "zebrawood" is shared by several different woods with this particular appearance. The most common species available are from West Africa, (Gabon, Cameroon, and Congo). They are an equatorial tree of medium to large size, gregarious, commonly growing in pure strands along riverbanks. Can grow to heights of 150 feet with trunk diameters of 4 to 5 feet. When cut it gives off an unpleasant aroma which disappears as it dries.

#### Environmental issues

Zebrawood is considered a threatened species in its native habitat. Its fast-growing popularity in the West has resulted in some reforestation efforts but this is not keeping up with the pace of destruction.

#### Wood description

A heavy hard wood with a somewhat coarse texture, with the typical so-called zebra stripes, often with an interlocked or wavy grain. The heartwood is a pale golden yellow, distinct from the very pale colour of the sapwood and features narrow streaks of dark brown to black. Zebrawood can also be a pale brown with regular or irregular marks of dark brown in varying widths. It is almost always quartersawn to get the exciting alternating colour pattern and a straight grain. It is a true exotic wood, with limited availability and relatively high prices.

Weight: 36-45 pounds per cubic foot Janka Ball Test: 1575 typical

#### Finishing

Difficult to finish because of the dual nature of the grain but finishes well once it's filled. The wood itself has a lustrous appearance. Regular solvent based Polyurethane worked well for me.

#### Machining

This wood is easy to saw but difficult to work with. Of all the woods I have handled, this rates as the worst to plane. It does not seem to matter which direction it is feed into a planer, it tears out badly in either direction. Experts recommend the use of a belt sander as the only feasible way to get a good smooth finish. If you receive it presanded, it is relatively easy to cut to size for all your woodworking projects. Can be glued if done with care. The problem of grain blowout can be solved by using a helical head cutter in the planer. a helical head replaces the traditional straight planer blades with a multitude of smaller, adjustable blades. When cut, Zebrawood gives off a strong odour that is reminiscent of sewage.