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Division)

Information sheet-woods of the world



Ebony common name for members of the Ebenaceae, a family of trees and shrubs widely distributed in warmer climates and in the tropics. The principal genus, *Diospyros*, includes both ebony and persimmon trees. Ebony wood, valued from ancient times, is hard and dark; it is extensively used for piano keys and in cabinetmaking, especially the black Macassar ebony of India and the East Indies. Several species (notably *D. hirsuta*) that have wood striped with black or with shades of brown are called calamander wood or variegated ebony. Several other unrelated hardwoods are commonly called ebony

Diospyros spp.

African Ebony

Family: Ebenaceae

Other Common Names: Mgiriti, Msindi (Tanzania), Omenowa (Ghana), Kanran, Nyareti (Nigeria), Kukuwo (Gambia).

Distribution: Commercial supplies are mostly from Equatorial West Africa. Forms almost pure groups near riverbanks.

The Tree: May attain a height of 50 to 60 ft with a trunk diameter of about 2 ft.

The Wood:

General Characteristics: Heartwood uniform jet black or black brown or streaked; sapwood pink colored when freshly cut, darkening to a pale red brown, very variable in width. Texture very fine; grain straight to slightly interlocked or somewhat curly. Sawdust may cause dermatitis.

Weight: Basic specific gravity (ovendry weight/green volume) about 0.82; air-dry density 63 pcf.

Mechanical Properties: (2-cm standard)

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Moisture content Bending strength Modulus of elasticity Maximum crushing strength

(%) (Psi) (1,000 psi) (Psi)

12% (9) 27,400 2,560 13,350

12% (44) 21,200 NA 9,350

Janka side hardness 3,220 lb for dry material. Amsler toughness 280 in.-lb for dry material (2-cm specimen).

Drying and Shrinkage: in small dimensions dries fairly rapidly with little tendency to check or warp, may split in log form. Kiln schedule T6-D2 is suggested for 4/4 stock and T3-D1 for 8/4. Shrinkage green to 12% moisture content: radial about 5.5%; tangential about 6.5%.

Working Properties: Heartwood difficult to work with hand and machine tools, has a pronounced dulling effect on tool edges, may pick up in planing if grain is irregular, takes an excellent polish. Good steam-bending properties.

Durability: Heartwood rated as very durable, moderately to highly resistant to termite attack.

Preservation: Heartwood extremely resistant; sapwood moderately resistant to permeable.

Uses: Parts of musical instruments, handles for cutlery and tools, brush backs, carvings, turnery, inlaid work.

Additional Reading: (3), (9), (44), (48)