

Tropical Timbers of the World

Tropical timbers are now an established part of the U.S. marketplace. Since the early 1960s, U.S. tropical lumber imports increased fourfold, and plywood imports (primarily from Asian sources) soared fortyfold, to the point where plywood imports equal domestic production. By contrast, log imports decreased drastically, from 100 million board feet (450,000 m³) (log scale) in the 1950s to 14 million (63,000 m³) in 1987. Much of the world timber trade is now processed material.

A comprehensive reference book published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, describes the array of tropical wood species and species groupings now available to U.S. processors. *Tropical Timbers of the World*, Agriculture Handbook 607, describes 370 species of tropical trees and their characteristics and uses. The 464-page book includes softwoods, hardwoods, decorative species, and utility woods from three geographical areas: Tropical America, Africa, and Southeast Asia and Oceania.



Author Martin Chudnoff, formerly of the USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory, compiled and synthesized data from world literature and spent more than 30 years studying tropical woods.

Information on the species and species groupings includes scientific and common names, distribution, general characteristics, weight, mechanical properties, and current uses. A section of comparative tables on specific properties and end uses follows the individual species entries grouped by geographic origin. The book includes an index of trade names and important common names cross-referenced to scientific names and geographic region.

Tropical Timbers provides researchers, tropical wood processors, and importers with an invaluable, well-organized reference. The easily used book assembles detailed data not previously accessible to most users. The continued growth in lumber imports from tropical areas will

increase the demand for more adequate scientific and technical data on these woods and their applications.



Planalto forest in Rio Curua-Una region, Brazil. About 60 percent of the volume is in species considerably denser than U.S. commercial woods (basic specific gravity over 0.70).



Degradation of wood products due to attack by decay fungi and insects is an ever-present hazard in the tropics. Construction lumber imported into Puerto Rico is treated with wood-preserving salts and then stacked for air drying.

Copies of Agriculture Handbook 607 are available from:
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Service (NTIS)
5285 Port Royal Rd.
Springfield, VA 22161
Order No.: PB85-156917
Cost: \$86.50 + \$5 S&H (U.S.); \$174 + \$10 S&H (non-U.S.)
Phone: (800) 553-6847



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