



**USDA Forest Service
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Wood Technology Transfer Fact Sheet

Melia azedarach

Persian Lilac

Chinaberry Tree

Family: Meliaceae

Other Common Names: Tamaga (Burma), Bois rouge (New Caledonia), Chinaberry tree (United States).

Distribution: Native to the Himalayan region and perhaps elsewhere in Asia. Cultivated throughout the tropical and subtropical regions of the world as an ornamental.

The Tree: Open-grown trees with straight, fairly cylindrical boles to a length of 12 ft; trunk diameters 1 to 2 ft. Bark, leaves, and fruit have some medicinal applications.

The Wood:

General Characteristics: Heartwood reddish, darkening on exposure to a reddish brown marked with dark striations caused by zones of earlywood pores; sapwood yellowish white, distinct. Grain straight; texture coarse and uneven; lustrous; without characteristic odor or taste.

Weight: Basic specific gravity (ovendry weight/green volume) 0.47; air-dry density 36 pcf.

Mechanical Properties: (First set of data based on the 2-cm standard, the second set on the 2-in. standard.)

Moisture content Bending strength Modulus of elasticity Maximum crushing strength

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

12% (52) 16,000 1,300 8,100

Green (27) 8,500 1,150 3,920

Amsler toughness 327 in.-lb for dry material (2-cm specimen).

Drying and Shrinkage: The timber seasons exceptionally well with little or no degrade due to warping or checking. No data available on kiln schedules. Shrinkage green to oven-dry: radial 5.0%; tangential 8.5%; volumetric 13.5%.

Working Properties: Easy to saw and machine, and peels well on a veneer lathe; dresses to a smooth finish and takes a good polish.

Durability: The timber is reported to be resistant to attack by decay fungi and termites.

Preservation: No information available.

Uses: Turnery, furniture components, decorative veneers, novelty items, boxes and chests.

Additional Reading: (27), (47), (52)

27. India: For. Res. Inst. and Colleges. 1963. Indian woods: their identification, properties, and uses. Vol. II. Linaceae to Moringaceae. Manager of Publications.

47. Pearson, R. S., and H. P. Brown. 1932. Commercial timbers of India. Gov. of India Central Publ. Br., Calcutta.

52. Sallenave, P. 1971. Propriétés physiques et mécaniques des bois tropicaux. Deuxième Supplément. Centre Tech. For. Trop., Nogent-sur-Marne.

From: Chudnoff, Martin. 1984. Tropical Timbers of the World. USDA Forest Service. Ag. Handbook No. 607.