



**USDA Forest Service
Forest Products Laboratory
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Wood Technical Fact Sheet

Vitex spp.

Fiddlewood

Aceituno

Family: Verbenaceae

Other Common Names: Negrito coyote (Mexico), Barbas, Rajate bin (Guatemala, Honduras), Cuajado (Panama), Aceituno (Colombia, Venezuela), Perchiche (Ecuador), Tahuari (Peru), Taruma cheiroso (Brazil).

Distribution: Throughout tropical America from Mexico and the West Indies southward to Argentina and Uruguay.

The Tree: Size varies with species but may reach a height of 75 to 100 ft with trunk diameter of 24 to 36 in.

The Wood:

General Characteristics: Heartwood variable with species; yellowish brown, deep brown, olive green, or olive brown; usually not sharply demarcated from the whitish yellow, or pale brown sapwood. Luster low to high; texture rather fine to moderately coarse; grain straight, sometimes irregular; without distinctive odor or taste. A silica content of 0.76% is reported.

Weight: Basic specific gravity (ovendry weight/green volume) 0.52 to 0.60; air- dry density 40 to 46 pcf.

Mechanical Properties: (First and third sets of data based on the 2-in. standard, the second set on the 1-in. standard.)

Moisture content Bending strength Modulus of elasticity Maximum crushing strength
(%) (Psi) (1,000 psi) (Psi)

Green (74) 9,420 1,490 4,780

12% 12,890 1,570 7,010

12% (24) 17,700 2,400 10,900

12% (44) 16,600 2,040 NA

Janka side hardness at 12% moisture content 1,160 lb. Forest Products Laboratory toughness average for green and dry material 108 in.-lb (5/8-in. specimen).

Drying and Shrinkage: Reports are variable, material from Panama had a moderate drying rate and no appreciable defects; V. gaumeri from Belize is somewhat difficult to season with a moderate amount of crook and checking. No data available on kiln schedules. Shrinkage from green to oven-dry: radial 3.2%; tangential 6.4%; volumetric 10.4%.

Working Properties: Easy to work with both hand and machine tools though there is some tearing if grain is irregular; takes a high polish; V. cooperi splits readily while V. gaumeri is very difficult to split.

Durability: Depending on species, varied from moderately durable to very durable when exposed to a white-rot and brown-rot fungus. Actual field exposures show some species as durable and others as susceptible to attack by decay fungi and insects.

Preservation: Heartwood is not treatable, sapwood has good absorption and penetration of preservatives using either a pressure-vacuum or open-tank system.

Uses: Furniture, millwork, veneer and plywood, general carpentry, mallet heads, chisel handles (V. gaumeri), flooring.

Additional Reading: (24), (41), (44), (74)