



CORNWALL WOODCARVERS

Wood Identification

~ *What wood is that?* ~ Herbert L. Edlin ISBN 0 85442 008 8 ~

To identify wood you must be able to identify the various structures of the wood; rings, rays, pores, sapwood, heartwood, springwood, summerwood, knots.

There are several keys to identifying wood, in order of importance (usefulness)

1. General colour	6. Rays
2. Secondary colour (heartwood), (mixed rings)	7. Hardness
3. Rings	8. Weight (density)
4. Pores	9. Smell
5. Grain on longitudinal surface	10. Bark and Leaf

1. General Colour	Possible Woods
Whitish	Ash, Poplar, Maple, Sycamore
Yellowish	Birch, Plane (Lacewood), Lime, Oak, Pine, Satinwood, Zebrawood (Zebrano) Iroko (fresh cut)
Purplish or crimson	Padouk, Purpleheart
Reddish or pinkish	Beech, Cedar (western red) Douglas Fir, Mahogany, Pear wood, Sapele, Utile
Brownish	Cedar (Lebanon), Cherry, Elm, Eucalyptus, Iroko, Oak (brown), Rosewood, Teak, Walnut (Circassian) Walnut (American), Wenge
Blackish or greyish	Ebony, Palsao

2. Secondary Colour	Possible Woods
One colour woods	Ash, Poplar, Maple, Sycamore, Birch Lacewood (plane), Lime, Oak, Mahogany, Sapele, Pearwood, Cherry, Elm, Teak, Black Walnut, Utile,
Two colour woods	Bird's eye maple, Oak, Pines, Zebrawood, Beech, Douglas fir, Cedar, Sapele, Iroko, Rosewood, Ebony
Warning!	Notice the cross overs, and some woods (e.g. Poplar) are sometime one colour and sometimes two.

3. Rings	
Annual Growth Rings – Distinct	Ash, Maple (birds eye), Lacewood, Teak, Oak, Pine, Zebrano, Cedar, Douglas fir, Sapele, Cherry, Elm, Iroko, Eucalyptus, Rosewood, Walnut
Annual Growth Rings – Obscure	Poplar, Sycamore, Maple, Birch, Lime, Beech, Mahogany, Pear wood, Walnut, Ebony



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4. Pores			
Absent (naked eye)	Pine, Cedar, D.Fir		
Pores in rings	Ash, Oak, Poplar, Teak		
Pores irregular - defused	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Fine Pores Poplar, Maple, Sycamore, Birch, Lacewood, Lime, Beech, Cherry, Iroko, Ebony</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Course Pores Zebrano, Mahogany, Sapele, Elm, Rosewood, Eucalyptus, Walnut</td> </tr> </table>	Fine Pores Poplar, Maple, Sycamore, Birch, Lacewood, Lime, Beech, Cherry, Iroko, Ebony	Course Pores Zebrano, Mahogany, Sapele, Elm, Rosewood, Eucalyptus, Walnut
Fine Pores Poplar, Maple, Sycamore, Birch, Lacewood, Lime, Beech, Cherry, Iroko, Ebony	Course Pores Zebrano, Mahogany, Sapele, Elm, Rosewood, Eucalyptus, Walnut		

5. Grain	
Distinct	Ash, Bird's-Eye maple, Maple, Oak, Teak, D.Fir, Eucalyptus, Cedar(Lebanon), Cherry, Elm, Iroko, Rosewood,
Faint	Sycamore, Birch, Lacewood, Cedar (others), Beech, Mahogany, Sapele, Walnut (Circassian)
Obscure - Invisible	Poplar, Lime, Satinwood, Pear wood, Ebony

6. Rays	
Distinct	Maple, Sycamore, Lacewood, Oak, Beech, Mahogany, Cherry, Elm, Circassian Walnut
Obscure	Ash, Poplar, Birch, Satinwood, Zebrano, Lime, Pine, Cedar, D.Fir

7. Hardness	
	<i>Not to be confused with softwood and hardwood</i>
Soft	Poplar, Lime, Pine, Cedar, Douglas Fir, Elm, Mahogany
Hard	Ash, Maple, Plane (Lacewood) Oak, Yew, Beech, Iroko, Cherry, Eucalyptus, Teak, Walnut, Ebony, Sapele, Utile

8. Weight (density)	
Very Light	Poplar, Cedar, Balsa, Jelutong
Light	Lime, Maple (sycamore) Pine, D. Fir, Plane, Cherry, Mahogany
Heavy	Ash, Maple (birds eye) Birch, Oak, Beech, Sapele, Pear wood, Walnut
Very Heavy	Satinwood, Purpleheart, Greenheart, Ebony, Lignum vita, Rosewood

9. Smell	
	<i>When fresh cut</i>
Peppery	Agba
Unpleasant	Zebrano, Australian walnut
Pleasant	Lime, Cherry, Rosewood
Sharp, tannic-acidic	Oak
Resinous	Pine, D. Fir, Ponderosa
Aromatic	Cedar, Sapele, Black walnut, Eucalyptus
Leathery	Teak



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10. Bark & leaf	Beyond the scope of this tutorial
	Bark and leaf are often not present to be used for reference

Of course I prefer option 11. The Label!

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