



VITEX

(Vitex Cofassus)

Vitex is a major commercial species of the Solomon Islands. Vitex is a firm timber, in general easily worked. However, the timber's relatively high silica content causes severe blunting of cutting edges. For this reason, the use of tungsten-carbide blades is recommended. Teak holds nails and screws well, although pre-boring is recommended when nailing. Gluing sometimes presents difficulties because of the oily nature of the wood, and it is important to bond only freshly dressed surfaces. Vitex will readily accept paints and stains. It also varnishes, polishes and waxes well. It is not suitable for steam bending. Sanding dust irritates the skin of some users.



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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

COLOUR

The heartwood is generally golden brown but varies from grey-brown to red brown. Longitudinal streaks are often present due to the ring-porous structure of teak. Sapwood is well demarcated, being pale yellow in colour.

GRAIN

The grain is straight or occasionally interlocked. Texture is uneven varying from smooth to coarse due to its ring porosity.

STRENGTH

S3 unseasoned; SD3 seasoned.

STRUCTURAL RATINGS

F4, F5, F7, F8 (unseasoned), F7, F8, F11, F14 (seasoned)

HARDNESS (JANKA)

5.6kN (Seasoned) & 5.1kN (Unseasoned)

TERMITE RESISTANCE

Resistant

SHRINKAGE TO 12% MC

2.2% (tangential); 1.2% (radial).

DURABILITY ABOVE GROUND

High – More than 40 Years

DURABILITY IN GROUND

Reasonably High – 15-25 Years

WORKING PROPERTIES

Vitex is usually relatively easy to work but silica can be present and this will necessitate frequent sharpening of tools. It peels easily and nails satisfactorily but gluing sometimes presents difficulties because of the oily nature of the wood. It is important to have freshly dressed surfaces. Good resistance to acids. Not corrosive to metal fixings. Unsuitable for steam bending because of excessive buckling. Sanding dust is irritating to the skin for some people. White inclusions of calcium oxalate sometimes appear as flecks in the vessels, lowering the value of veneer thus affected.

USES

Perhaps best known for its use in boat building, teak has been extensively used for decking, rails, bulwarks, hatches, weather doors, and planking. It is also used for cooperage, pipes, and chemical vats. In general construction it is suitable for flooring, decking, framing, cladding, fascias and barge boards. Decorative uses of teak include indoor and outdoor furniture, parquetry, turnery, carving, lining and paneling.



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