

HARDWOODS AND HIGH QUALITY SOFTWOODS

British Cedar



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What is British Western Red Cedar?

British grown Western Red Cedar generally has similar properties to material imported from North America. The only notable difference is the natural durability which is rated as moderately durable (imported material is cladding as durable (imported material is classified as durable).

Latin Name Thuja plicata

The Tree British Western Red Cedar is the largest of the so-called cedars, it grows to a height of 45m to 75m with a diameter of 1m to 2.5m.

Environmental Not listed in CITES. Believed available from well-managed sources.

Distribution UK.

British Western Red Cedar Properties

The Timber: the sapwood is narrow and white in colour, and the heartwood is reddish-brown. When freshly felled, the heartwood often displays a marked variation in colour; that from the centre of the log may be dark chocolate brown changing to a salmon pink nearer the sapwood, or the wood may be variegated with alternate dark and light zones. After drying, the wood assumes a uniform reddish-brown tone, but after long exposure to weather the colour is lost and the wood becomes silver-grey. This weathered appearance is sometimes purposely sought by architects, but a further peculiarity of the wood is its ability to take and hold stain of the finest tint without discolouration.



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The wood is non-resinous, straight-grained, somewhat coarse-textured and exhibits a fairly prominent growth-ring figure it is soft, rather brittle, aromatic, especially when wet and light in weight, about 390 kg/m³ when dried.

Drying: thin sizes dry readily with little degrade, but the timber generally tends to hold its moisture at the centre and care is needed with thick stock to avoid internal honey-combing and collapse. The timber holds its position well after drying with practically no tendency to warp and check. While movement due to shrinking and swelling in changing atmosphere is small.

Working Qualities: good - the timber works easily with both hand and machined tools but it is relatively brittle nature, which can cause splintering during some operations, and its soft character, which can lead to chip-bruising, usually means that care is needed in order to obtain the best results during mortising, planing and moulding. A good finish can be obtained, but cutters must be kept sharpened.

Physical Properties: timber grown in Britain contains frequent small knots which can cause tearing in planing and moulding. Furthermore, the wide bands of soft springwood can be difficult to work with hand and machined tools.

Durability: moderately durable, resistant to heartwood decay. Sapwood liable to attack by powder post beetle.

Treatability: easy, when dried.

Texture: coarse



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Working with British Western Red Cedar

Use(s): cladding

Colour(s): light brown, with red tints

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