

# European Beech



Please contact one of our helpful experts for more information **+44(0) 1373 469905**

**Lightly Steamed European Beech** timber is imported square edged and sometimes log sawn (waney-edge). Beech timber is prone to heavy movement due to the denseness of the wood and also stresses within the timber that occur after machining. Unsteamed is usually paler and both are stocked as kiln dried. We have found in recent years less demand for the deliberately 'fully steamed' pink Beech, but it can be offered 'to special order'. Standard sawn thicknesses: 24mm, 36mm, 48mm, 64mm and 80mm. lengths range from 2m to 4m approximately.

**Latin name** Fagus Sylvatica

**Also Known as** European Beech

**Environment** Not listed in CITIES. Available from well-managed sources.

**Distribution** Europe, especially central Europe and Britain.

European Beech Properties

**The Tree** Beech has been called the mother of the forest, since without it in mixed broad-leaved forests, other hardwood timber trees would have greater difficulties for survival. The rain-drip from beech destroys many soil-exhausting weeds, its shade prevents over-evaporation of moisture from the soil, and its heavy crop of leaves provides humus to the soil. In close forest, it can reach a height of 45m with a clear bole of 15m but on average this is usually about 9m with a diameter averaging 1.2m occasionally more.



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**The Timber** Normally, there is no clear distinction by colour between sapwood and heartwood, the wood being very pale brown when freshly cut, turning reddish-brown on exposure, and deep reddish-brown under the influence of steaming treatment commonly applied in parts of the continent before shipment. Some logs show an irregular, dark reddish-coloured kern or heart, caused it is believed, by the effect of severe frosts, and occurring more frequently in continental beech. The wood is typically straight grained, with a fine, even texture, but varying in density and hardness according to the locality of growth. Thus beech from central Europe, notably that from Yugoslavia (Slavonian), and that from Romania is milder and lighter in weight, about 672kg/m<sup>3</sup>, than beech from Britain, Germany and northern European, which weighs about 720kg/m<sup>3</sup> when dried. British Beech is harder, more coarse-grained than German.

**Drying** Although it dries fairly rapidly and fairly well, Beech is moderately refractory, wider widths tending to warp, twist, check and split, and shrink considerably. It therefore requires care both in air drying and kiln drying.

**Strength** Green beech has general strength properties roughly equal to those of oak, but after drying, most values increase, and unkilned beech is stronger than oak in bending strength, stiffness and sheer by some 20%, and considerably stronger in resistance to impact loads.

**Working Qualities** Good - \*Red heart extremely difficult to work. Beech varies somewhat in its ease of working and machining according to growth characteristics and dried condition. Thus fairly tough material, or badly dried stock may tend to bind on the saw, or burn when cross cut, or, if distorted due to drying, causes difficulties in planing. On the whole, however it works fairly readily, and is capable of a good smooth surface. Beech turns well, takes glue readily, and takes stains and polish satisfactorily. It produces excellent veneer. Good for nailing/screwing but should be pre-bored.



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**Durability** Not durable. Slightly / non-resistant to heartwood decay. Liable to attack by the common furniture beetle and longhorn beetle. Permeable for preservation.

**Treatability** Easy

**Moisture Movement** Large

**Density** (mean, kg/m<sup>3</sup>) 720

**Texture** Fine

**Availability** Readily available

**Chemical Properties** Excellent

**Physical Properties** Good overall strength, excellent shock resistance, good resistance to abrasive wear.

Working with European Beech

**Use(s)** Joinery - interior, furniture, flooring, paneling, brush handles, turning, food storage / containers.

**Colour** Pink / pale red, reddish brown (after steaming), white / cream (English)

Timbersource are a leading online hardwood timber merchant in the UK, supplying European Beech timber to the joinery, carpentry, construction and building trade at competitive prices.

