

HARDWOODS AND HIGH QUALITY SOFTWOODS

Western Red Cedar



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What is Western Red Cedar?

Western Red Cedar timber from Canada / North America is very popular because of its natural durability and pleasant aroma. When freshly machined, it looks variegated from a straw-colour up to dark brown/red but becomes more uniform in natural light. The Western Red Cedar timber is imported 'green' i.e. not dried, due to the fact that much of it is used externally, and it can be seasoned quickly if required for interior paneling. The best grade, #2 Clear & better, is predominantly knot-free, imported in standard thicknesses of 1", 2", 3" and 4". The widths are 4", 6", 8" and 10" and the lengths are mainly 7' - 14'.

Latin name Thuja plicata

Also known as Western Red Cedar, giant arbor vitae (USA), red cedar (Canada).

Environmental not listed in CITES, available from well-managed sources.

Distribution a tree of the northern Rocky Mountains and Pacific North-west; its full range extends from Alaska southwards to California, and eastwards along many of the interior ranges of British Columbia, northern Washington, Idaho and Montana to the western slope of the continental divide.

Western Red Cedar Properties

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



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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 a dark chocolate-brown changing to salmon pink nearer the sapwood, or the wood may be variegated with alternate dark and light zones. After conventional high temperature kiln 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. The wood is non-resinous, straight-grained, somewhat coarse textured and exhibits a fairly prominent growth-ring figure. It is soft, rather brittle, aromatic 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 or check while movement due to shrinking and swelling in changing atmospheres is small.

Strength it is a lightweight and soft timber which contributes to low strength properties and compared with European Redwood (*Pinus sylvestris*) it is some 20 to 30 percent inferior in bending strength, and about 15 percent less stiff. It is also much less resistant to splitting and indentation on side grain than redwood.

Qualities good - the timber works easily with both hand and machine tools, but its 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.



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A good finish can be obtained, but cutters must be kept sharpened.

Durability durable, long lasting, particularly when properly treated.

Treatability extremely difficult, difficult (sapwood)

Moisture Movement small

Abrasions medium

Physical Properties very durable, high resistance to warping, twisting and checking.

Texture coarse

Chemical Properties fine, dust may be irritant. The timber is acidic which may corrode metals under damp conditions and cause iron staining.

Working with Western Red Cedar

Use(s) cladding, decking, joinery exterior, fences, gates, lattice, planters, trellis, arbors and Gazebos.

Colour(s) reddish brown (ages to silver grey if left unprotected).

Timbersource are a leading online timber merchant in the UK, supplying Western Red Cedar at competitive prices. To contact us, [Click Here](#).



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