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Iroko

Chlorophora excelsa (Milicia excelsa)

Family: Moraceae

Other Common Names: Semli (Sierra Leone, Liberia), Odoum (Ghana, Ivory Coast), Rokko, Oroko (Nigeria), Abang, Mandji (Cameroon, Gabon), Mereira (Angola), Kambala (Zaire), Mvule (East Africa).

Distribution: The two species, between them, extend across the entire width of tropical Africa. *C. regia* limited to the extreme west of Africa from Gambia to Ghana and is less drought resistant.

The Tree: May reach a height of 160 ft, bole straight, cylindrical and clear to 80 ft, small buttresses sometimes present.

The Wood:

General Characteristics: Heartwood varies from a pale yellowish brown to dark chocolate brown with lighter markings most conspicuous on flat-sawn surfaces; sapwood yellowish white, clearly demarcated. Texture medium to coarse; grain typically interlocked, sometimes irregular; slightly greasy feel; without odor; wet sawdust may cause dermatitis; occasional large "stone" deposits of calcium carbonate.

Weight: Basic specific gravity (ovendry weight/green volume) 0.55; air-dry density about 43 pcf.

Janka side hardness 1,080 lb for green and 1,260 lb for dry material. Amsler toughness 166 to 248 in.-lb for dry material (2-cm specimen).

Drying and Shrinkage: Dries rapidly with little or no degrade. Kiln schedule T6-D2 is suggested for 4/4 stock and T3-D1 for 8/4. Shrinkage green to ovendry: radial 2.8%; tangential 3.8%; volumetric 8.8%. Movement in service is rated as small.

Working Properties: Works fairly easily with hand or machine tools but with some tearing of interlocked grain; occasional deposits of calcium carbonate severely damage cutting edges; good nailing and gluing characteristics; moderate steam-bending properties; may cause dermatitis in working wet wood.

Durability: Heartwood is very durable and is resistant to termite and marine borer attack as well. Sapwood liable to powder-post beetle attack.

Preservation: Heartwood is extremely resistant to preservative treatments; sapwood permeable.

Uses: Suggested as a teak substitute. Joinery, boatbuilding, piling and marine work, domestic flooring, furniture, veneer, railroad crossties, cabinetwork, shop fittings.

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Technology Transfer Fact Sheet



Center for Wood Anatomy Research

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