



Purpleheart

Scientific Name: *Peltogyne spp.*



Distribution: Occurs in the West Indies from Cuba to Trinidad and from Honduras south through Central America, the Guianas, and into Brazil, Colombia, and Peru, and the overflow delta lands of the Orinoco in Venezuela; often occurs in pure stands; a lowland species but also at high altitudes along rivers.

The Tree: Commonly 80 to 100 ft. in height with diameters 2 to 3 ft.; sometimes attain diameters up to 6 ft. and heights of 170 ft. Buttresses are low, leaving a clear bole length of 50 ft. or more; main stems are straight and of good form.

General Characteristics: Heartwood is a light salmon to reddish brown when fresh, becoming darker when dry, color very variable; sapwood is pinkish turning pale brown or grayish, not always sharply demarcated from heartwood. Texture varies from fine to coarse; luster ranges from low to high; grain usually straight but sometimes roey; odor and taste lacking.

Weight: Basic specific gravity (ovendry weight/green volume) 0.78; air-dry density 58 pcf.

Mechanical Properties: (First set of data based on the 2 in. standard; second on the 2-cm standard; third on the 1 in. standard.)

Moisture Content (%)	Bending Strength (Psi)	Modulus of Elasticity (1,000 Psi)	Max. Crushing Strength (Psi)
Green (75)	13,690	2,000	7,020
12%	19,220	2,270	10,320
Green (30)	21,000	2,560	9,250
15%	26,700	N/A	12,200
12%	30,900	3,460	14,500

NOTE: duplicate values under "Moisture Content" represent multiple tests conducted at different times.

Janka side hardness ranges from 1,860 lb to 3,920 lb at 12% moisture content. Forest Products Laboratory toughness at 12% moisture content ranges from 157 to 398 in. lb. (5/8 in. specimen).

Drying and Shrinkage: Reports vary, from air-dries easily to moderately difficult; dries slowly to fairly rapidly; with almost no degrade to some warping and splitting Kiln schedule T6-D2 is suggested for 4/4 stock and T3-D1 for 8/4. Shrinkage green to ovendry: radial 3.2%; tangential 6.1%; volumetric 9.9%. Stability after manufacture or movement is rated as small.

Working Properties: Moderately difficult to work with either hand or machine tools, dulls cutters, exudes a gummy resin when heated by dull tools; slow feed rates and specially hardened cutters are suggested. Turns smoothly, easy to glue, and takes finishes well.

Durability: Heartwood is rated as highly durable in resistance to attack by decay fungi; very resistant to dry-wood termites; but little resistance to marine borers.

Preservation: Heartwood is reported to be extremely resistant to impregnation with preservative oils; sapwood is permeable.

Uses: Turnery, marquetry, cabinets, fine furniture, parquet flooring, tool handles, heavy construction, shipbuilding, many specialty items (billiard cue butts, chemical vats, carving).