



UNITY
MAKERS

WOOD
GUIDE

JANUARY 2018

MANGO

MANGIFERA INDICA

Mango is one of the most sustainable woods available in Kenya: when mango trees grow old, the quality of the fruit declines and they are typically cut and replaced with new trees. This creates a perfect source of wood for furniture, which we source from the coast of Kenya.



A hardwood, mango is softer than mahogany or mvuli, but harder than softwoods like cypress, making for durable, long-lasting furniture.

In addition to sustainability, mango distinguishes itself with its striking appearance. While it is mostly a golden brown color, reds, yellows, greens, and blacks are also present

in unusual patterns. It can also be dark stained for a more subtle effect.

Further resources

www.wood-database.com/lumber-identification/hardwoods/mango/

www.sustainableplant.com/2013/01/mango-offers-a-sustainable-alternative-as-furniture-wood/



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1 m SAMPLE



ASHOKA

SARACA ASOCA

Ashoka is a small to medium sized tree originating from India & is found on the Kenyan coast.

It produces a very striking timber with a colour spectrum from dark brown to white. It has the highest mass index of all of our hard woods and is certainly the hardest. Working with this timber can be very tricky however it's results can be something special.



Due to the size of the tree we do not regularly stock Ashoka & only do once we find a suitable procurement opportunity that benefits the surrounding community of where it came from.



HABITATION SET & CRUX DINING TABLE IN ASHOKA



GRAIN CLOSE UP



GREEN ASH

FRAXINUS PENNSYLVANICA

As its name suggests this species has been introduced from North America and is also called Mexican or Green Ash. It is a hardy tree, growing best in situations between 1,500 and 2,000 metres above sea level.



A hardwood, Green Ash is softer than mango, mahogany or mvuli, but harder than softwoods like cypress, making for durable, long-lasting furniture. It's also carries a subtle yet beautiful grain throughout.

Due to its fast growth & mass-index properties, Green Ash is a very suitable white timber for construction & furniture. Commonly used for

windbreaks in Kenya. We procure from areas where the trees need to be felled for replantation as they have outgrown their environment.



GRAIN CLOSE UP



MVULI

MILICIA EXCELSA

Mvuli is one of the most popular timber species in East Africa, alongside mahogany. It is also commonly known as iroko or African teak and is found across tropical central Africa.



Similar to teak in both appearance and physical properties, it is quite hard and durable and is resistant to rot and termites, making it suitable for use indoors and out.

It is an attractive yellow/brown color, without the redness of mahogany, with a tight, even grain. It looks great in any finish, though we prefer it natural, without stain.

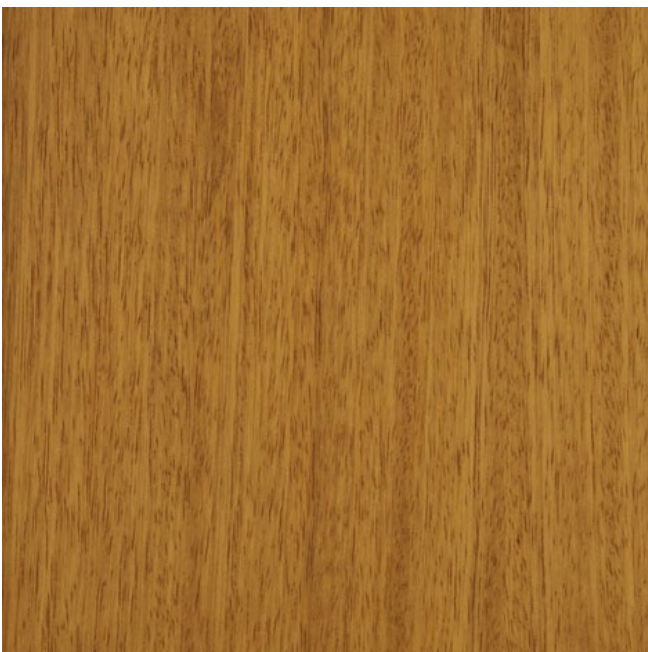
For a stained finish, mahogany is usually a better and less expensive option.

Mvuli is easily one of our favorite choices for many different types of pieces and spaces.

Further resources

www.wood-database.com/lumber-identification/hardwoods/iroko/

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MAHOGANY

KHAYA ANTHOTHECA

The term mahogany is used to refer to many species of reddish-brown hardwood grown in various parts of the world. In Kenya we have Khaya anthotheca, sometimes called East African mahogany. It is a large tree between 30 to 60 metres tall.



East African Mahogany is generally a reddish-brown color, with some pieces more red and others more neutral, depending on the growing conditions of the tree. It tends to have a straight, regular grain which can yield beautiful dark and light bands of color when finished. It takes stain very nicely,

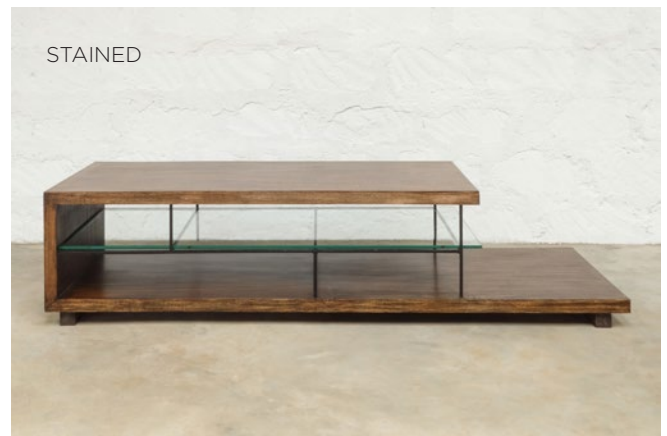
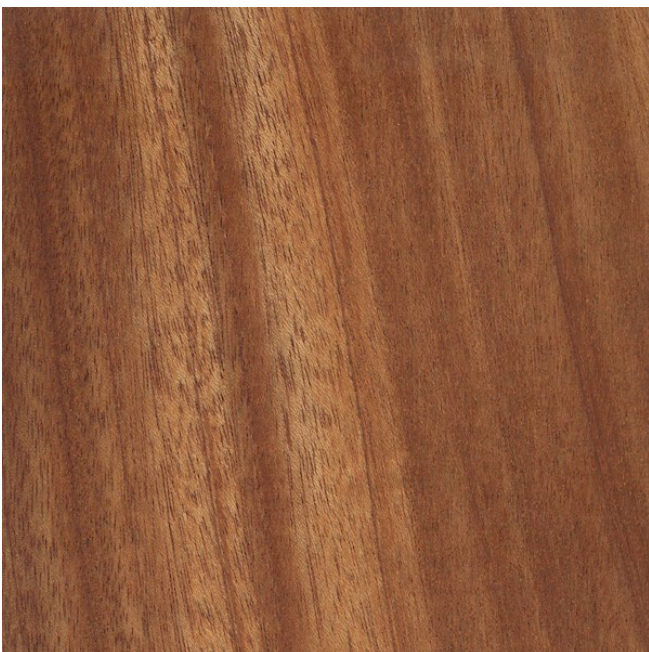
which can neutralize the redness and yield a refined color similar to walnut.

With its excellent physical properties, mahogany is the most popular high-end furniture wood in Kenya and we use it for many of our pieces. However, it is often specified “by default,” so we encourage our clients to also consider mvuli and mango.

Further resources

www.wood-database.com/lumber-identification/hardwoods/african-mahogany/

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CYPRESS

CUPRESSUS LUSITANICA

Cypress was introduced in Kenya in 1910 and has since become an important industrial and plantation crop. Very similar to pine, it is a fast-growing softwood which yields straight and easily worked timber.



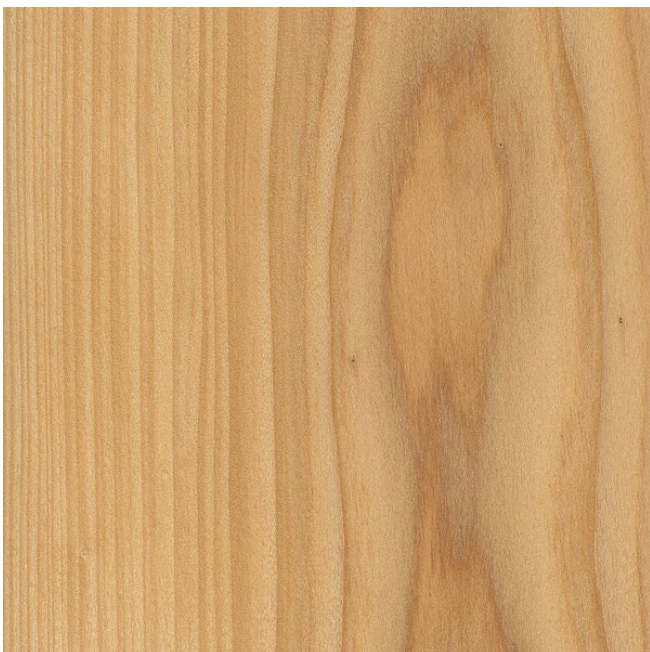
Compared to hardwoods such as mahogany and mvuli, cypress is often considered a second class timber due to its characteristic knots and relative softness. However, its light grain and knots are quite beautiful when finished, so we think it is worthy of consideration for certain pieces and more casual spaces.

It can also be dark stained or white tinted for different effects.

Further resources

www.wood-database.com/lumber-identification/softwoods/mexican-cypress/

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DARK STAINED



WHITE TINTED