

BRAZILIAN CHERRY / JATOBA
(*HYMENAEA COURBARIL L.*)

Other Common Names: Jatoba (Brazil), Cuapinol, Guapinol (Mexico), Guapinol (Central America), Locust, Kawanari (Guyana), Rode lokus (Surinam), Algarrobo (Spanish America), Jatahy.



Distribution: Southern Mexico, throughout Central America and the West Indies to northern Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru. The tree's best development is on ridges or slopes and high riverbanks.

The Tree: May grow to a height of 130 ft with trunk diameters of 5 to 6 ft; usually less than 100 ft high with diameters of 2 to 4 ft. Boles are well formed, often clear for 40 to 80 ft, and basally swollen or buttressed in large trees.

The Wood:

General Characteristics: Heartwood is salmon red to orange brown when fresh, becoming russet to reddish brown when seasoned; often marked with dark streaks. Sapwood is usually wide; white, gray, or pinkish. Texture is medium to rather coarse; grain mostly interlocked; golden luster; without distinctive odor or taste.

Weight: Basic specific gravity (oven dry weight/green volume) 0.71 to 0.82; air- dry density 52 to 61 pcf.

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

Moisture content (%)	Bending strength (Psi)	Modulus of elasticity (1,000 psi)	Maximum crushing strength (Psi)
Green (74)	12,940	1,840	5,800
12%	19,400	2,160	9,510
12% (24)	25,100	2,870	14,200

Janka side hardness at 12% moisture content 2,350 to 3,290 lb. Forest Products Laboratory toughness average for green and dry material is 230 in.-lb (5/8-in. specimen).

Drying and Shrinkage: The wood is rated as slightly difficult to air-dry; it seasons at a fast to moderate rate with only slight checking and warp. Kiln schedule T3-C2 is suggested for 4/4 stock and T3-C1 for 8/4. Shrinkage green to oven dry: radial 4.5%; tangential 8.5%; volumetric 12.7%-values are low for a wood of this density.

Working Properties: The wood is moderately difficult to saw and machine largely because of its high density, but except in planning it can be machined to a smooth surface. The wood is somewhat difficult to plane because of the interlocked grain. It is easy to glue and finish satisfactorily; steam-bending properties comparable to white oak.

Durability: Laboratory evaluations rate the wood very resistant to brown-rot and white-rot fungi; actual field exposure trials also rate the wood as very durable. Heartwood is also rated very resistant to dry-wood termites; little resistance to marine borers.

Preservation: Heartwood is not treatable using open-tank or pressure-vacuum systems. Sapwood, however, is responsive.

Uses: Tool handles and other applications where good shock resistance is needed, steam-bent parts, flooring, turnery, furniture and cabinet work, railroad crossties tree-nails, gear cogs, wheel rims, and other specialty items. Tree exudes a rosin-like gum known commercially as South American copal. Seed pods contain an edible pulp.

SOURCE: US Department of Agriculture – Forest Service