



Spanish Cedar (Cedrela odorata)

Uses: Spanish Cedar is widely used as a construction timber in South America, as well as for furniture and paneling. But in N.America, spanish cedar is really known for its very distinctive fragrance, and thus as the wood of choice for lining humidors, cigar boxes and cigar wrappers. Applications for the wood also include craft projects, high-end cabinetry and furniture, clothing chests, interior joinery, patterns, lead pencils, boat building, canoe decks and musical instrument parts.

The Tree: Cedrela Fissilis Family This species grows almost everywhere in Central and South America and is known by a wide variety of names. The family consist of about seven species. An interesting fact about Spanish cedar is that it is not really a cedar at all. In fact, it is a deciduous tree. The oils in the heartwood do have a distinct cedar smell, so I suppose that is how it got named. These trees average 100 feet in height with 6 foot diameters. The Amazon Indians chose these trees to carve their canoes.

Wood Description: Spanish cedar will vary in colour depending on the origin and soil conditions but generally it has a pinkish to red coloured heartwood which darkens with exposure, to either a red-brown or red-purple tone. Although they suggest that the sapwood can be pink or white, I must tell you that all the wood I have seen is pretty consistent in colour.. maybe that is because they leave the sapwood in the bush.

The wood is usually straight grained, but can be interlocked. It has a fine and uniform texture.

If you are using this for the interior of a humidor, make sure that your supplier is only shipping the non weepy, variety. (this is the only type we carry) One species has a lot of sap and can cause problems when the temperature is elevated within your humidor. Having said that, even buying the Non-weepy variety of spanish cedar I still find that it bleeds while sitting on the shelf. I think the dry northern climate tends to draw the sap to the surface.

Remember you don't want to entirely remove the oils from the wood, as that is what gives your cigar some of their aroma, or so they tell me.

Weight: 24-55 lbs./ft³ - average of 30 lbs./ft³

Finishing: Stains and finishes well though innate oils can sometimes be a problem in finishing. In most humidor applications it is left unfinished, allowing the wood's natural oils to add flavor to the cigars

Machining: Spanish Cedar has moderately good steam bending qualities. It dries rapidly with minor warping and slight checking. It works well and easily with hand and machine tools. Experts recommend sharp cutting edges to avoid wooliness. It has good nailing and gluing properties. Generally I've found Spanish cedar to be a relatively easy wood to work with, although the oil makes it somewhat of a smelly operation. For furniture I might choose a mahogany instead.