

Celery Top: *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius*

Other common names: Celery Top Pine

The Timber

Celery Top is a natural, durable and tough fine grained timber. The wood is creamy white when freshly cut and darkens to a mellow rosy gold hue over time and with exposure to sunlight. The timber has distinct annual rings with pronounced latewood. Slowly grown, it has a hardness, strength and density not normally associated with conifers.

Celery Top is easy to work. It turns well and has long been employed in the traditional crafts of boat building and spindle turning. The timber is valued for its durability and it withstands exposure well, especially out-of-ground contact. A tough wood, it provides a hard-wearing surface for flooring and has an attractive fine-grained appearance. Features such as knots and other figure provide character to furniture constructed of Celery Top. Knots are sound and hard, the timber planes and sands well and accepts varnish, stains, and paint readily.

The Resource

Celery Top is a conifer native to Tasmania. It is named for its distinctive celery-like leaves. The tree is readily recognised by its bark, which is a dark reddish brown and occurs as thick tessellated plates with numerous raised pores. The leaves are dark green, thick and leathery, about 2cm broad and 5cm long. Both male and female cones are small and the female cone is quite distinctive. The black seed is encased in a soft white sheath above a red fleshy aril. The fruit has the appearance of a diminutive yew cone and is thought to be attractive to birds as germinants are often found beneath roost trees.

The species can be found over much of the forested area of Tasmania from wet areas in the drier forests of the north-east, to the rainforests of the far south-west. It forms an understorey component of wet forest or is dominant on wet soils with poor fertility. The diameter of mature trees ranges from 40 to 85cm and they can reach 40m in height and live for up to 800–900 years; ages of less than 350 years are common.

The tree can be seen in the Mt. Field National Park in the south of Tasmania or most other mature wet forests across the State.





Celery Top properties

Colour	Varies from white to pale straw. Darkens with age.
Grain	Grain is straight, fine and even with clearly visible growth rings.
Texture	Close and uniform.
Durability	In-ground contact: Class 3. Outside above ground: Class 2. Termite resistance of heartwood: Resistant. Refer to AS 5604-2005 Timber - Natural durability ratings. The above ground durability of the heartwood is very good.
Lyctid susceptibility	Not susceptible.
Sizes	Undressed seasoned timber 25 to 300mm wide by 25 to 50mm thick. Unseasoned timber is available in similar sizes, or cut to order.
Density	Approximately 650kg/m ³ at 12% moisture content. Unseasoned density approximately 1050kg/m ³ .
Shrinkage (green to 12% MC)	Approximately 1.5% radial, 3.5% tangential. May undergo longitudinal shrinkage up to 0.3% if compression wood is present.
Movement	Between 25% and 5% MC, radial movement is approximately 0.12% per 1% MC change; tangential movement about 0.19% per 1% MC change.
Strength groups	Seasoned SD5, unseasoned S4.
Joint group	Seasoned JD3, unseasoned J3.
Structural grades	Most commonly available structural grade is number 3; F11 seasoned, F8 unseasoned.
Toughness (Izod)	7.6J unseasoned, 6.5J seasoned.
Hardness (Janka)	3.9kN unseasoned, 4.5kN seasoned.

Fire hazard properties: flooring (AS ISO 9239.1)

Critical radiant heat flux	> 2.2 and < 4.5kW/m ²
Smoke development rate	< 750%.min

Workability

General	The close grain and resilience of Celery Top make it an easy timber to work.
Blunting	Moderate.
Sawing	Usually cuts cleanly and accurately. Moderate feeding forces required.
Planing	Planes well "with the grain". Tends to chip and flake when working "against the grain", which can be a problem near knots.
Moulding	Straight-grained material produces good mouldings.
Boring	Holes are clean and to size.
Rebating + mortising	Usually produces good results.
Turning	Turns well. Care needs to be taken to avoid chipping near fine edges.
Nailing	Difficult to nail when seasoned. Pre-drilling recommended.
Gluing	Glues satisfactorily with most common adhesives.
Bending	An excellent bending timber. 25mm material bends very well to a radius of 50mm.
Finishing	Readily worked to a smooth, flat surface. Most finishes adhere very well.

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