

Huon Pine: *Lagarostrobos franklinii*

Formerly *Dacrydium franklinii*

Other commons names: White Pine, Macquarie Pine

The Timber Huon Pine is the prince of Tasmanian timbers. The richness of its golden colour and figure make it one of the world's most desirable furniture and veneering timbers. Its durability and workability make it one of the best boat-building timbers known. The wood contains a natural preserving oil with an unmistakable perfume, and its fine and even grain makes the wood exceptionally easy to work with hand tools.

The 'Piners' (early timber getters) searched the inhospitable wilderness of Tasmania's west coast to cut and haul out Huon Pine logs. The timber was used for everything where durability and ease of working was required; in furniture and tables, in washtubs and ships, and in machinery and patterns for casting.

The Resource Huon Pine is a species endemic to Tasmania. It is restricted to the western and south-western parts of the state, growing along river banks, lake shores and swampy localities in mixed formations. The tree grows very slowly to about 30m in height and 1m in diameter. A tree of this size may be one thousand years old. Study of the growth rings of larger and older pieces (dendroclimatology) is being used as one means of determining trends in global climate change.

Today, the quality of Huon Pine continues to be recognised, but its supply is carefully nurtured and controlled. Almost all Huon Pine forests are reserved and much of the resource that is available comes from logs salvaged from rivers, the forest floor and areas inundated by hydro electric schemes. Supply is about 500m³ per year for craft and furniture industries for the next fifty years and is available from specialist saw millers on the west coast of Tasmania with a tradition in Huon Pine milling.





Huon Pine properties

Colour	Light straw, ageing to dull yellow.
Grain	Straight fine and even, sometimes with birds-eye figuring. Growth rings are conspicuous and usually wavy.
Texture	Close, uniform and smooth.
Durability	In-ground contact: Class 3. Outside above ground: Class 3. Termite resistance of heartwood: Resistant. Refer to AS 5604-2005 Timber - Natural durability ratings.
Lyctid susceptibility	Not susceptible.
Sizes	Undressed seasoned timber 25 to 350mm wide by 25 to 50mm thick. Lengths up to 5400 mm long are available.
Density	Approximately 550kg/m ³ at 12% moisture content. Unseasoned density approximately 950kg/m ³ .
Shrinkage (green to 12% MC)	Approximately 2.5% radial, 3.5% tangential.
Movement	Between 25% and 5% MC, radial movement is approximately 0.14% per 1% MC change; tangential movement about 0.27% per 1% MC change.
Strength groups	Seasoned SD6, unseasoned S6.
Joint group	Probably seasoned JD4, unseasoned J4.
Structural grades	F7 to F14 seasoned, F4 to F8 unseasoned.

Workability

General	Huon Pine is very easily worked, may be highly polished and is a very good bending timber.
Blunting	Slight.
Sawing	Cuts cleanly and accurately with low feeding force.
Planing	Low feeding forces required. Surfaces very smooth and lustrous.
Moulding	Produces excellent mouldings.
Boring	Easy to drill. Holes are clean and to size.
Rebating + mortising	Generally produces good results.
Turning	An exceptional turning timber.
Nailing	Nails hold fairly well, except on end grain where timber can tend to split.
Gluing	Difficulties can arise due to the presence of natural oils. Preparation may require washing with an organic solvent. Formaldehyde glues usually give the best results; others may have problems.
Bending	A very good to fair bending timber. 25mm material bends fairly well to a radius of 50mm.
Finishing	Good results can be obtained. Use of some finishes may require washing with an organic solvent to remove some of the natural oils.

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