HEALTH HAZARDS & WOOD

Some of the potential health hazards associated with timber use

In Australia all wood dust is now classified as carcinogenic (liable to cause cancer) This list has been compiled to give woodworkers a little bit of an insight into the potential health hazards posed by some of the timbers that are used.

This list is not meant to discourage you from woodworking just as a guide to help identify some of the problems you may de having with your health or may possibly have in the future. It is a wise investment to purchase a good respirator especially if you are a woodturner or do a lot of sanding. You may also need to look at putting a dust extractor into your workshop and even a small particle dust extractor which can eliminate particles as small as 1 micron in size (invisible to the naked eye).

This is by no means a comprehensive list of timbers and their hazards. If you can tell us of more timbers and their hazards we would be grateful, and shall add them to this list. Please feel free to E-MAIL us with any new info you may have.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A

abura	Tropical Africa	Nausea, eye irritation, giddiness
a-dead-finish	Australia	Wood splinter and thorns cause skin irritation, dust causes dermatitis
afara	Central & West Africa	Splinters cause skin inflammation
African boxwood	South Africa	Irritation to nose and throat, headache, asthma fainting, shortness of breath, erythema
African mahogany	West Africa	Skin irritation, dermatitis, nasal cancer
African walnut	Africa	Irritation to mucous membranes, nasal cancer, irritation of alimentary tract
afrormosia	Tropical West Africa	Dermatitis, rhinitis, asthma
agba	Angola, Zaire, Nigeria	Dermatitis
albizzia	South East Asia, Pacific Australia	Irritation to nose, eyes, alimentary tract, nausea, dermatitis
alder	Europe, North America	Dermatitis
alpine ash	Australia	Irritation to nose, eyes and throat, dermatitis
American mahogany	Central America, northern South America, Mexico, plantations in Fiji	Skin irritation, giddiness, vomiting, furunculosis

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bibu	Indian Sub-Continent	Sap causes blistering of skin, eye irritation
black bean	Australia	Dermatitis, itchiness, irritation of mucous membranes
black cherry	USA, Canada, Europe	Wheezing, giddiness
blackwood	Australia, plantations in South Africa	Dermatitis, asthma, irritation to nose and throat
brazilwood	Northern South America	Headache, nausea, painful swelling of arms, visual disturbances
brigalow	Australia	Dermatitis
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calophyllum	S.E. Asia, Pacific, New Caledonia, Australia, New Guinea	Dermatitis, kidney damage, irritation to nose and throat
caroba	Central and South America, planted in most tropical areas	Dermatitis
cocuswood	Central America	Dermatitis
cocobolo	Central America, Mexico	Dermatitis, irritation to nose and throat, conjunctivitis, bronchial asthma, nausea
coolibah	Australia	Bark and wood dust may cause skin irritation
crow's ash	Australia, New Guinea	Dermatitis
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dahoma	Africa	Dermatitis, coughing, sneezing, nose bleeding
difundu	Africa	Dermatitis
djohar	South East Asia, India, Australia	Skin discoloration, eye irritation, keratitis
Douglas fir (oregon)	USA, Canada, plantations in New Zealand, Australia & Europe	Dermatitis, nasal cancer, irritation to eyes and throat
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East Indian satinuood	India, Pakistan, Ceylon	Dermatitis, headache, swelling of scrotum, irritation of mucous membranes
ebony	Africa, Malagasy, Ceylon, South East Asia	Skin inflammation, acute dermatitis, sneezing, conjunctivitis
European beech	Europe	Nasal cancer, dermatitis

European boxwood	Southern Europe, Asia Minor	Dermatitis, irritation to nose, eyes and throat
European elm	Europe	Dermatitis, irritation of mucous membranes, cancer
European walnut	Europe, Asia Minor	Dermatitis, nasal cancer
eyum	Africa	Irritation of nose and throat, dermatitis
F - G TOP OF PAGE		
gaboon	Equatorial Africa	Itchy skin, irritation to eyes and nose
greenheart	Northern South America	Headache, wheezing, shortness of breath, disturbance of vision, diarrhoea, erythema
grey box	Australia	Eczema, irritation of mucous membranes
guarea	Tropical West Africa	Dermatitis, asthma, nausea, disturbance of vision, headache
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Indian rosewood	South East Asia, India, New Guinea	Dermatitis
Ipe	Northern South America	Dermatitis, shortness of breath, headache, disturbance of vision
iroko	Tropical West & East Africa	Dermatitis, furunculosis, oedema of eyelids, respiratory difficulties, giddiness
ivorywood (South American)	Tropical South America	Dermatitis
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jacareuba	Central and South America	Dermatitis, loss of appetite, kidney damage, fainting, insomnia
jarrah	Australia	Irritation to nose, throat and eyes
keruing	South East Asia	Dermatitis
kwila (merbau)	Australia, New Guinea, Pacific Islands, South East Asia	Dermatitis, rhinitis
lignum vitae	West Indies, Central & northern South America	Dermatitis
limba	Tropical Africa	Splinters may cause festering sores or skin irritation
lingue	Africa	Irritation to eyes, nose and throat
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mansonia	Tropical West Africa	Dermatitis, nausea, vomiting, nose bleeding, sneezing, giddiness, asthma
marking nut	Australia, India	Sap and wood dust may cause skin lesions, eye irritation, nose bleeding
massaranduba	Northern South America	Dermatitis
meranti (red,white,yellow)	South East Asia	Dermatitis, Irritation to nose, throat and eyes
messmate	Australia, plantation in Africa, Europe and South America	Dermatitis, asthma, sneezing,
milky mangrove	Australia, South East Asia, Pacific	Sap may cause irritation to eyes, even temporary blindness, headache, burning of throat, blistering of skin
Miva mahogany	Australia	Congestion of lungs, eye inflammation, irritation of mucous membranes, headache, nose bleed, loss of appetite
molompangady	Malagasy	Dermatitis, sores
mountain ash	Australia, plantations in South America, Africa, Europe	Irritation to nose, throat and eyes, dermatitis
muhuhu	Africa	Dermatitis
mulga	Australia	Wood contains a virulent poisonous principle, used for spear heads by aboriginals. Dust may cause irritation to mucous membranes, headache, vomiting
muninga	Africa	Bronchitis, asthma, dermatitis
myrtle beech	Australia	Irritation to mucous membranes
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needlewood	India, South East Asia	Bark causes skin irritation
N.Z. white pine	New Zealand	Dermatitis, irritation to nose, throat
nkassa	Africa	Headache, giddiness, vomiting, disorders of bowels & stomach, irritation to nose & throat
nortbern silky oak	Australia	Green timber may cause dermatitis
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oak (European and Japanese)	Europe, Japan, China	Nasal cancer, dermatitis, sneezing
obeche	West Africa	Asthma, sneezing, congestion of lungs
odoum	Africa	Dermatitis, irritation to nose and throat

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padauk	Afric a, New Guinea, S.E. Asia, Andaman Islands	Asthma, dermatitis
palisandre wood	South America	Dermatitis
parinari	Central and northern South America, Africa, South East Asia, Pacific, New Guinea	Dermatitis
pau amarello	South America	Dermatitis
Phoenician juniper	Central and southern Europe, northern Africa, South East Russia	Nausea, headache, skin irritation
poison walnut	Australia	Bark very irritating to skin. Dust may cause breathing problems, vomiting, giddiness, dermatitis
poplar	Nth America, Europe, east Asia	Asthma, dermatitis, bronchitis
Port Oxford cedar	U S A	Dermatitis
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ramin	S E Asia, New Guinea, Pacific	Sharp fibres cause skin irritation & infection
red cedar	Australia, South East Asia, New Guinea, India, plantations in Central America	Violent headache, giddiness, stomach cramps, asthma, bronchitis, dermatitis, irritation of mucous membranes
red lancewood	Northern South America	Dermatitis
red peroba	South America	Nausea, sweating, asthma, cramps, drowsiness, fainting, irritation of mucous membranes, dermatitis
red siris	Australia	Dermatitis, nose bleed, conjunctivitis, giddiness
redwood	North America	Dermatitis, asthma
rengas	South East Asia, New Guinea, Malagasy	Bark, sap and wood dust irritating to skin, causing dermatitis, blistering, chronic ulcers
rimu	New Zealand	Irritation to nose, eyes
rose butternut	Australia	Dermatitis, conjunctivitis
rosewood	South East Asia, New Guinea	Dermatitis, asthma
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saffron-heart	Australia, New Guinea	Splinters cause skin Infection. Dust causes dermatitis, congestion of lungs
sapale	Africa	Skin irritation, sneezing
satine	South America	Excessive salivation, feeling of thirst, nausea
South American cedar	Central & South America, Mexico	Dermatitis, irritation to nose and throat, nasal cancer, asthma
southern silky oak	Australia, New Caledonia	Sap may cause blistering of skin, inflammation of eyelids. Dust may cause dermatitis
spotted gum	Australia, plantations in South America, Africa & Europe	Dermatitis
spruce	Nth. America, Japan, Europe	Irritation to nose and throat
stinging tree	Australia, Asia	Stinging hairs on leaves and bark have intensely irritating effect on skin, may cause paralysis, breathing problems, severe pain
sweetgum	Southern North America	Dermatitis
sumac	Asia, Nth & Sth America, Europe	Bark causes blisters, dust may cause dermatitis
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talh	Northern Africa	Dermatitis, coughing, irritation to mucous membranes
taun	South East Asia, New Guinea	Dermatitis, rhinitis
teak	South and South East Asia, plantations in most tropics	Dermatitis, conjunctivitis, over sensitivity to light, swelling of scrotum, irritation to throat& nose, nausea
thorny yellowwood	Australia	Lesions made by thorns & splinters take a long time to heal. Dust causes dermatitis, cramp, eye & throat irritation, disturbance of vision
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white cedar	Eastern North America	Dermatitis
white baltic	Europe	Asthma, skin irritation
white cypress pine	Australia	Dermatitis, swelling of eyelids, asthma, irritation of nose and throat, nasal cancer, furunculosis
white handlewood	Australia	Sap very irritant to eye, dust causes dermatitis, abdominal pains, nausea
white peroba	South America	Dermatitis, asthma

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yang	S.E. Asia	Dermatitis, inflammation of mucous membranes, furunculosis, inflammation caused by splinters
yellow gum	Australia	Irritation to nose and throat
yew	Europe, Asia Minor	Dermatitis, headache, congestion of lungs, nausea, fainting, irritation of alimentary tract, visual disturbances

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