

INCENSE CEDAR



Incense Cedar
(*Calocedrus decurrens*)

Common Name(s): Incense Cedar, California White Cedar
Scientific Name: *Calocedrus decurrens* (syn. *Libocedrus decurrens*)
Distribution: Western North America (primarily California)
Tree Size: 65-100 ft (20-30 m) tall, 3-5 ft (1-1.5 m) trunk diameter
Average Dried Weight: 24 lbs/ft³ (385 kg/m³)
Specific Gravity (Basic, 12% MC): .35, .38
Janka Hardness: 470 lb_f (2,090 N)
Modulus of Rupture: 8,000 lb_f/in² (55.2 MPa)
Elastic Modulus: 1,040,000 lb_f/in² (7.17 GPa)
Crushing Strength: 5,200 lb_f/in² (35.9 MPa)
Shrinkage: Radial: 3.3%, Tangential: 5.2%, Volumetric: 7.7%, T/R Ratio: 1.6

Color/Appearance: Heartwood is light to medium reddish brown. Sapwood is differentiated from heartwood and is light tan to off-white. It's not uncommon for boards to contain pockets of partially decayed wood (peck) due to fungal attack.

Grain/Texture: Grain is straight, with a medium to fine uniform texture.

Endgrain: Resin canals absent; earlywood to latewood transition gradual, color contrast medium; tracheid diameter medium; zonate parenchyma.

Rot Resistance: Despite the commonness of pockets of fungal decay (sometimes referred to as "pecky cedar"), dried wood is rated as durable to very durable in regards to decay resistance, and the wood is sometimes used for fence posts on account of its good weathering characteristics.

Workability: Easy to work with both hand and machine tools. Holds paint very well. Stains, glues, and finishes well. Excellent dimensional stability.

Odor: Incense Cedar is one of the primary woods used in making pencils, and has a spicy odor that's commonly associated with pencils.

Allergies/Toxicity: Although severe reactions are quite uncommon, Incense Cedar has been reported to cause skin irritation. See the articles [Wood Allergies and Toxicity](#) and [Wood Dust Safety](#) for more information.

Pricing/Availability: Prices likely to be moderate for a domestic species.

Sustainability: This wood species is not listed in the CITES Appendices, and is reported by the IUCN as being a species of least concern.

Common Uses: Pencils, Venetian blinds, fence posts, construction lumber, sheathing, siding, chests, and various exterior furniture applications.

Comments: Incense Cedar is favored for use in wood pencils due to its softness and ease of cutting without any splintering. (Historically, Eastern Redcedar was used for pencils, but limited supplies of the wood—and consequently higher prices—have caused it to become displaced by Incense Cedar in modern times.)

Related Species:

None available.