

Pterocarpus

See text

Pterocarpus is a pantropical genus of trees in the family Fabaceae. It belongs to the subfamily Faboideae, and was recently assigned to the informal monophyletic Pterocarpus clade within the Dalbergieae.[2][3] Most species of Pterocarpus yield valuable timber traded as padauk (or padouk), usually pronounced /pəˈduːk/ or /ˈpædɒk/;[4] other common names are mukwa or narra. The west African species may be traded as African rosewood.[5] *P. santalinus* also yields the most precious red sandalwood in China known as Zitan.[6][7] The wood from the narra tree (*P. indicus*) and the Burmese padauk tree (*P. macrocarpus*) is marketed as amboyna when it has grown in the burl form.[8] The scientific name is Latinized Ancient Greek and means "wing fruit", referring to the unusual shape of the seed pods in this genus.

Padauk wood is obtained from several species of Pterocarpus. All padauks are of African or Asian origin. Padauks are valued for their toughness, stability in use, and decorativeness, most having a reddish wood. Most Pterocarpus[9] woods contain either water- or alcohol-soluble substances and can be used as dyes.

The padauk found most often is African padauk from *P. soyauxii* which, when freshly cut, is a very bright red/orange but when exposed to sunlight fades over time to a warm brown. Its colour makes it a favourite among woodworkers. Burmese padauk (■■■■■■■■) is *P. macrocarpus* while Andaman padauk is *P. dalbergioides*. Padauks can be confused with true rosewoods to which they are somewhat related, but as a general rule padauks are coarser and less decorative in figure. Like rosewood, padauk is sometimes used to make xylophone, organ and marimba keys, and guitars. It is an important material in traditional Chinese furniture.

Some padauks, e.g. *P. soyauxii*, are used as herbal medicines, for example to treat skin parasites and fungal infections.[10]

Pterocarpin is a pterocarpan found in Pterocarpus spp.[11]

A total of 35 species is currently accepted:[12][13]

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