

## COMMON WOOD SPECIES

How to identify them, where you'll find them—and how to (re)finish them.

WOOD	COLOR	CHARACTERISTICS
almond	Rich reddish blond	Fine grain
applewood	Pinkish blond	Sinuuous grain
ash	White to pale brown	Sinuuous, open grain
beech	Blond	Fine, linear grain
birch	Pale blond with reddish streaks	Hardwood with a fine, sinuuous grain
boxwood	Blond	Very dense; no grain
burls	Walnut burl: contrasted browns; Elm and Circassian walnut burl: blond	Highly figured (burls are knots and roots)
cedar and cypress	Light reddish brown	Lightweight and resinous; insect-repellent
cherry	Rich reddish brown	Uniform, straight, fine grain with a smooth texture; darkens with age
chestnut	Warm brown with a hint of red	Rustic texture and grain
ebony	Traditionally black, but huge variations exist	Hard, brittle wood with a closed, figured grain
elm	Light blond	Hard, dense wood with a medium grain
hickory	Blond to light brown	Dense hardwood
holly	White	Fine, uniform grain
kingwood	Rich, violet brown	Straight, intense grain

SEEN ON	USED FOR	RECOMMENDED TREATMENTS
Louis XIV	Rare cabinetry	Fine finishes; polishes
American Colonial; William and Mary	Rich inlay; marquetry	Polishes; oil
American Colonial; Biedermeier	Rustic furniture	Wax; ceruse
Louis XV; Gustavian; Biedermeier	Frames	Paint; bleaching; staining; oil
Gustavian; Shaker; Biedermeier	Almost all furniture	Staining; oil rub and wax
Louis XIV; Second Empire	Precious carvings; turning; inlay	Clear wax; oil rub
Louis XIV; Art Deco	Precious veneer	High-gloss finishes; French polish
“Syrian” furniture; Spanish Colonial; American Colonial	Trunks and wardrobes	Avoid finishing!
American Colonial; Queen Anne; Louis XV; Chippendale; Shaker; Federal; Biedermeier	Large furniture such as armoires, tables, and buffets	Oil and wax; shellac
Rustic French	Large furniture such as armoires, hutches, tables, and buffets	Rustic finishes; wax; tung oil
Louis XIV, XV, and XVI; First Empire; Second Empire; Victorian; Art Deco	Support for precious marquetry	Tung oil; wax
American Colonial; Gustavian; Biedermeier	Traditional support for veneer	Wax; staining; paint
American Colonial	Solid, massive furniture; rustic furniture; trunks	Wax; oil rub
Renaissance; Louis XIV; Second Empire	Inlay and marquetry	Ebonizing; fine polishes
Louis XIV, XV, and XVI	Precious inlay; fine veneer	Fine polishes

WOOD	COLOR	CHARACTERISTICS
lime	White	Fine, uniform grain
macassar	Reddish brown with black stripes	Tight grain
mahogany	Reddish brown	Hardwood with a close grain, straight grain (ribbon), or figured grain (cathedral)
maple	Straw blond	Hardwood with a fine grain
oak	Red or white	Very hard wood with an open grain. Flat-cut oak has a figured grain; quartersawn oak has a straight grain.
pear	Yellowish brown	No grain
pine	Blond to light brown	Soft wood with a straight grain and knots
poplar	White	Inconsistent color and pattern
rosewood	Red and black	Hardwood with a close, straight grain
satinwood	Rich blond	Fine-grained hardwood with beautiful streaks
sycamore	White with flecks	Tight grain
teak	Rich brown and red	Heavy, dense, and oily
walnut	Rich brown	Hardwood with a fine grain, straight or figured
willow	White	Fine, uniform grain
zebrawood	Yellowish brown with dark stripes	Hardwood with a nice streaky figure—very decorative

SEEN ON	USED FOR	RECOMMENDED TREATMENTS
Renaissance-era and 18th-century Venetian furniture	Inlay and marquetry	Ebonizing; fine polishes
18th-century French furniture; Art Deco	Formal furniture and veneer	The most formal or the simplest finish: French polish or wax polish
Queen Anne; Georgian; Louis XVI; Federal; Empire; Victorian; Second Empire	Limited to very expensive furniture until the 19th century	Perfect for all refined finishes, such as French polish
American Colonial; William and Mary; Queen Anne; Chippendale; Shaker; Federal	Almost all types of furniture	Natural wax and oil; ebonizing
Tudor; Jacobean; Dutch and Flemish; Louis XIV; William and Mary; Victorian	Massive furniture	Oil and wax; rustic finishes; decorative effects
Louis XIV; Second Empire; Art Deco; Modernist	Inlays and precious furnishings during Louis XIV's time; ebonized Second Empire furniture; Art Deco and Modernist furniture	Ebonizing; natural-colored finishes (clear wax or tung oil)
William and Mary; Dutch Colonial; Pennsylvania Dutch; Alpine and rustic European furniture; English <i>pitchpin</i>	Cheaper support for veneering	Paint; wax; oil
Ubiquitous	Backs and insides of furniture and other paint-grade parts	Paint; primers
Sheraton; Regency; Victorian	Precious furniture and veneer; inlay and marquetry	French polish; shellac and clear wax
Adam; Hepplewhite; Sheraton; 18th-century Irish; Federal	Precious veneer; refined furniture	French polish; shellac and clear wax; clear-oil rub
William and Mary; Venetian furniture; Colonial; nice early-American country furniture	Marquetry in Europe	Oil; wax
Indo-Portuguese furniture; Anglo-Indian; Chinese export; midcentury modern; Modernist	Outdoor furniture; nice carvings; trunks and wardrobes	Unfinished is okay; tung oil; teak oil
Ubiquitous	Carvings; prized furniture	Great for French polish; wax; oil
Renaissance; Venetian	Inlay and marquetry	Clear wax; oil rub
Regency; Art Deco	Precious veneers and furniture	French polish; shellac and clear wax