

Japanese Lumber

Information Sheet - Hinoki Lumber

Common Name(s)	Hinoki, Japanese Cypress
Scientific Name:	Chamaecyparis obtusa
Distribution:	Endemic to Japan; commonly cultivated in plantations across Japan and limited areas of Taiwan.
Tree Size:	Height: 65-115 ft (20-35 m) Trunk Diameter: 3-5 ft (1-1.5 m)
Specific Gravity:	Basic: 0.37 12% MC: 0.42
Janka Hardness:	510 lbf (2,270 N)
Modulus of Rupture:	8,490 lbf/in ² (58.5 MPa)
Elastic Modulus:	1,420,000 lbf/in ² (9.79 GPa)
Crushing Strength:	4,650 lbf/in ² (32.0 MPa)
Shrinkage:	Radial: 2.8% Tangential: 5.5% Volumetric: 8.3% T/R Ratio: 2.0
Colour/Appearance:	Heartwood: Pale pinkish brown, often deepening with age. Sapwood: Whitish, and clearly demarcated. Knots: Few, especially in premium-grade lumber, allowing near-clear finishes. Traditional Treatment: Hinoki is sometimes treated using the shou sugi ban

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	method to improve fire and rot resistance, although this is less common compared to Sugi.
Grain/Texture:	Grain: Straight. Texture: Fine and even. Natural Luster: High, with a smooth, satiny appearance.
Endgrain:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resin canals absent. - Earlywood-to-latewood transition is gradual, with slight colour contrast. - Small tracheid diameter and subtle latewood.
Rot Resistance:	Hinoki is rated as durable to very durable, with excellent natural resistance to rot, moisture, and insects.
Workability:	General: Easy to work with both hand and machine tools. Produces a smooth finish. Finishing: Glues, stains, and finishes well. Planing: Takes an excellent polish.
Odor:	Distinctive and pleasing lemony-cypress scent, which persists in finished pieces and is known to have calming, antibacterial properties.
Allergies/Toxicity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally considered non-toxic. - See Wood Allergies and Toxicity and Wood Dust Safety for further details.
Pricing/Availability:	Export Status: Available in limited quantities internationally. Quality Grades: Premium, near-clear grades are sought after and priced at the higher end of softwoods. Applications: Commonly sold as

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	high-quality dimensional lumber or as specialty products like beams, veneers, and fine interior materials.
Sustainability:	CITES Status: Not listed. Hinoki grows extensively on plantations in Japan, but old-growth, natural stands are increasingly rare due to overharvesting. Plantation management ensures sustainable yields for export and domestic use.
Common Uses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional Japanese construction (temples, shrines, baths) - Interior panelling and framing - Flooring - Furniture - Siding and cladding - Boatbuilding - Onsen (bathhouses) and ofuro (bathtubs) - Specialty woodcraft items
Comments:	Hinoki is revered in Japan as one of the "Five Sacred Trees" and has been used for centuries in temple and shrine construction. Its superior durability, stability, and antibacterial properties make it an excellent choice for high-end interior applications. Hinoki timber emits a soothing aroma, contributing to mental clarity and relaxation. It has been a cornerstone of Japanese culture, symbolizing purity, strength, and timeless beauty.
Legend:	Hinoki's use in ancient Japan dates back thousands of years. It is said that the wood was chosen for sacred buildings due to its

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	divine qualities and ability to withstand the test of time. Structures built with Hinoki, such as Horyu-ji Temple, remain standing today as some of the oldest wooden buildings in the world
Related Species:	Port Orford Cedar (<i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i>) Sugi (Japanese Cedar) (<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>) Alaskan Yellow Cedar (<i>Cupressus nootkatensis</i>)
Related Articles:	The Role of Hinoki in Traditional Japanese Architecture Antibacterial Properties of Hinoki: Benefits for Modern Living Spaces

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