

Poisonous, Allergenic, and Biologically Active Wood Varieties

Following is a list of woods that have commonly cause people to react. Note that the reactions may differ in sensitivity and intensity for each individual. Some people may have no reaction whereas other people may have a potentially life-threatening reaction. Following is a description of what the health impairments mean:

- Dermatitis – Reaction on the skin to dust or contact with wood, including rash and itchiness. Protection includes covering skin with clothing or gloves, and bathing often during and after contact.
- Conjunctivitis – Reaction in the eyes to dust, including swelling, redness, excess tears, and pain. Protection includes wearing sealed eye protection, such as goggles.
- Rhinitis – Reaction in the nasal and sinus passages, including swelling, excess mucous, and pain. Protection includes wearing good breathing filtration.
- Asthma – Reaction in the breathing passages and lungs, including swelling and difficulty breathing. ***This is a potentially life-threatening reaction.*** Protection includes wearing good breathing filtration and avoidance.
- Toxic effects – Reaction is more systemic with symptoms that may occur throughout the body, including nausea, dizziness, and pain. ***This is a potentially life-threatening reaction.*** Protection includes all of the above and also prevention of consuming any dust or wood particles. These woods are considered poisonous. Do not use these woods for items that may contact consumables, such as food.
- Allergic extrinsic alveolitis – This reaction can become a chronic lung disease caused by heavy and/or prolonged exposure to the dust. Reaction can be acute and starts with fever, muscular aches and a general, unwell feeling or malaise. These symptoms are accompanied by tightness in the chest, a dry cough, and shortness of breath. Reaction can be sub-acute and occurs most frequently to people exposed to relatively low levels of dust. It is marked by cough, shortness of breath, sweating, sore throat, headache, and nausea. The chronic response develops after persistent acute attacks and recurrent sub-acute responses. It is marked by increasing shortness of breath, occasional fever, loss of weight, and general lack of energy. The victim suffers permanent lung damage and, in the worst cases, death may occur. (Source: OSHA – www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/alveolitis.html) Protection includes wearing good breathing filtration and using good dust collection.

In all cases, severity of reaction may increase with additional exposures. For example, a wood that has not caused a reaction may, over time, create a sensitivity in a person to where a reaction may occur at a later time. It is also possible (if not probable) that a mild reaction may increase over time with additional exposures.

In all cases where dust may cause a reaction, use of excellent dust collection and good housekeeping habits will help to minimize potential problems. Also, even completely inert dust particles can cause long-term and serious breathing problems if inhaled over a long period of time. Use of dust filtration that filters to less than 5 microns is highly recommended.

In the following table, “spp.” means that there are several subspecies that are included in the specie name. If Origin is blank, the wood is found world-wide.

Scientific Name	Commercial Name	Family	Origin	Health impairment
Campsiandra laurifolia	acapu rana	Caesalpinaceae	America	toxic effects
Tieghemelia	African cherry, makora, douka, okola, ukola, abacu, baku	Sapotaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Mitragyna ciliate	African popula, vuku, abura	Rubiaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Lovoa	African walnut, tiger wood	Meliaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Triplochiton	African whitewood, obeche, samba, wawa, abachi, arere	Sterculiaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Alnus spp.	Alder, common and black	Beulaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Fitzroya cupressoides	alerce	Cupressaceae	America	dermatitis
Liquidambar styracifolia	aberbaum, satinnumsabaum	Hamaeideceae	America	dermatitis
Raputia	arapoca branca	Rutaceae	America	dermatitis
Fraxinus spp.	Ash	Oleaceae		dermatitis
Populus spp.	Aspen, popla	Salicaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma

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<i>Fundersia australis</i>	Australian teak, maple, maple silkwood	Rutaceae	Oceania (Australia and Southern Pacific Islands)	dermatitis
<i>Barberis vulgaris</i> L	barberry	Berberidaceae		toxic effects
<i>Hippomane mancinella</i> L	beach apple	Euphorblaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
<i>Fagus</i> spp.	beech	Fagaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
<i>Nauclea diderichii</i>	ilinga, West African boxwood	Rubiaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
<i>Betula</i> spp.	birch	Betulaceae		dermatitis
<i>Castanospermum australe</i>	black bean, Australian chestnut	Papilionaceae	Oceania	dermatitis
<i>Acacia</i> spp.	Blackwood, Australian blackwood	Mimosaceae	Oceania, Africa	dermatitis
<i>Euxylophora parensis</i>	boxwood	Rutaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
<i>Buxus</i>	European boxwood, Cape boxwood, East London boxwood	Buxaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
<i>Caesalpinia</i>	brasilwood	Caesalpinaceae	South American	dermatitis, toxic effects
<i>Melanoxydon brauna</i>	brauna, grauna	Caesalpinaceae	America	dermatitis
<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>	Asian camphorwood, cinnamon	Lauraceae	Asia	toxic effects
<i>Prosopis juliflora</i>	cashew	Mimosaceae	America	dermatitis
<i>Anacardium occidentale</i> L.	cashew	Anacardiaceae	America	dermatitis
<i>Juniperus</i> spp.	Eastern red cedar, Virginian pencil cedar	Cupressaceae	America/Asia	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
<i>Cedrela</i> spp.	red cedar, Australian cedar	Meliaceae	America/Asia/Oceania	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
<i>Thuja</i>	white cedar, western red cedar	Cupressaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
<i>Prunus</i> spp.	cherry, black cherry	Rosaceae		
<i>Castanea</i> spp.	chestnut, sweet chestnut	Fagaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
<i>Diospyros</i> spp.	African ebony, Macassar ebony, Ceylon ebony	Ebonaceae	Asia	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
<i>Brya</i>	brown ebony, green ebony, tropical ebony, American ebony, Jamaican ebony	Papilionaceae	America	dermatitis
<i>Ulmus</i> spp.	elm	Ulmaceae		dermatitis
<i>Dialium</i> spp.	eyum, eyoum	Caesalpinaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
<i>Pseudotsuga douglasii</i>	Douglas fir, red fir, Douglas spruce	Pinaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
<i>Abies alba</i> Mill	Silver fir	Pinaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
<i>Agonandra brasiliensis</i> Miers	Granadillo, Brazilian satinwood	Olocaceae	America	dermatitis

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Tecoma spp.	green heart, lapacho	Bignoniaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Esenbeckia lelocarpa	guaranta	Rutaceae	America	dermatitis
Eucalyptus spp.	yellow gum, spotted gum, alpine ash, mountain ash	Myrtaceae	Oceania	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Tsuga heterophylla Sarg.	Western hemlock	Pinaceae	North America	dermatitis
Carpinus betulus	hornbeam	Betulaceae		dermatitis
Pycnanthus angolensis	liomba	Myristicaceae	Africa	toxic effects
Terminalia	Indian laurel, limba, atara, ofram, frake, korina, adom	Combretaceae	Asia	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Jacaranda spp.	jacaranda, caroba, boxwood	Bignoniaceae	America	dermatitis
Machaerium	kingswood	Papilionaceae	America	dermatitis
Laburnum spp.	laburnum	Papilionaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Larix spp.	larch, European larch	Pinaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Ocotea spp.	laurel, stinkwood, Brazilian walnut, greenheart, East African camphorwood	Lauraceae	Africa/America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Gualacum officinale L.	lignum vitea	Zygophyllaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Phyllanthus ferdinandi	lignum vitea, chow way, tow war	Euphorbiaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Shorea spp.	luan	Dipterocarpaceae	Asia	dermatitis
Khaya spp.	African mahogany, ogwango, kraal	Meliaceae	Africa	dermatitis, allergic extrinsic alveolitis
Swietenia spp.	Honduras mahogany, American mahogany, Cuban mahogany	Meliaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, extrinsic allergic alveolitis, toxic effects
Dysoxylum spp.	mahogany, stavewood, red bean, rose	Meliaceae	Oceania, Asia	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Mimusops spp.	Makore, cherry mahogany, moabi, muirapiranga	Sapotaceae	Africa, America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, extrinsic allergic alveolitis, toxic effects
Acer spp.	Maple	Aceraceae		dermatitis
Semercarpus	marking nut	Anacardiaceae	Oceania, Asia	dermatitis, toxic effects
Hemandia spp.	mirobolan, topolite	Hemandiaceae	America	dermatitis
Illipe latifolia	moak, edel teak	Sapotaceae		dermatitis
Aucoumea idaineana Pierre	Gabon mahogany	Burserceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, extrinsic allergic alveolitis
Brachylaena hutchinal	muhuhu	Compositae	Africa	dermatitis
Chrysophyllum spp.	najara	Sapotaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Gosswellerodendron balsamiferum	Nigerian cedar	Caesalpinaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma

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Guarea spp.	Nigerian pearwood, cedar mahogany, bosse, guarea	Meliaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Mansonia altissima	Nigerian walnut	Sterculiaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Staudtia stipitata	niove	Myristicaceae	Africa	dermatitis
Quercus spp.	oak	Fagaceaea		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Grevilea robusta	silky oak	Proteaceae	Oceania, Asia	dermatitis
Pterocarpus spp.	African padauk, New Guinea rosewood, red sandalwood, red sanders	Papailionaceae	Asia, Oceania, Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Astrocaryum spp.	palm	Palmaceae	Africa	dermatitis, toxic effects
Bactris spp.	palm	Palmacea		dermatitis, toxic effects
Adira	Patridge wood, red cabbage treet	Papilionaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Aspidosperma spp.	Pau amarello, pau marfim, pequia marfim, amarilla, red peroba	Apocynaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Schinopsis	pau mulatto, red quebracho	Anacardiaceae	America	dermatitis, toxic effects
Rauwolfia pentaphylla	peroba	Apocynaceae	South America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Paratecoma spp.	white peroba, Brazilian peroba	Bignoniaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Pinus spp.	pine	Pinaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Dacrycarpus dacryoides	New Zealand white pine	Podocarpaceae	Oceania	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Araucaria	Parana pine	Araucariaceae	America	toxic effects
Callitris columellaris	pine, white cypress	Cupressaceae	Oceania	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Peltogyne spp.	purpleheart, bluewood	Caesalpinaceae	America	toxic effects
Apulela molaris Spruce	redwood	Caesalpinaceae	America	dermatitis, toxic effects
Sequoia sempervirens	California redwood, sequoia	Taxodiaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Blepharocarva	rose butternut	Anacardiaceae	Oceania	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Dalbergia spp.	rosewood, ebony, blackwood, foxwood, jacaranda	Pailionaceae	Africa, America, Asia	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Halfordia scleroxyla	saffron-heart	Polygonaceae	Oceania	dermatitis, extrinsic allergic alveolitis
Exoecarla Africana	African sandalwood, aloewood, blind-your-eye	Euphorbiaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Amvriss spp.	Venezualan sandalwood, West Indian sandalwood	Rutaceae	America	dermatitis, toxic effects

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Calophyllum spp.	santa maria, galba, jacareuba, kurahura	Guttiferae	America	dermatitis, toxic effects
Zollernia paraensis Huber	santa wood	Caesalpinaceae	America	dermatitis, toxic effects
Parinarium spp.	Guyana satinholz	Rosaceae	America	dermatitis
Chloroxylon spp.	Ceylon satinwood	Rutaceae	Asia	dermatitis, toxic effects
Distemonanthus	Nigerian satinwood	Caesalpinaceae	Africa	dermatitis
Fagara spp.	West Indian satinwood, yellow sanders, atlaswood	Rutaceae	Africa, America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Brosimum spp.	snakewood, bloodwood, letterwood	Moraceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Picea spp.	European spruce, whitewood, black spruce	Pinaceae	Asea	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, extrinsic allergic alveolitis
Bowdichia spp.	black sucupira	Papilionaceae	America	dermatitis
Ailanthus altissima Mill	Chinese sumach	Simaroubaceae	Asia, North America	dermatitis
Tectona grandis	teak	Verbanaceae	Asia	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, extrinsic allergic alveolitis
Liriodendron tulipifera	tulip tree, American whitewood	Magnoliaceae	America	dermatitis
Echinospermum balthazaril	vinhatico	Mimosaceae	America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Juglans spp.	walnut	Juglandaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma
Cryptocarya pleurosperma	poison walnut	Lauraceae	Ocean	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Melietta laurentil	wenge, panga-panga	Papilionaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects
Pseudomorus brunoniana	white handlewood	Moraceae	Oceania	dermatitis, toxic effects
Chlorophora	yellowwood, African teak, gelbholz	Moraceae	Africa, America	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, extrinsic allergic alveolitis
Taxus baccata	yew	Taxaceae		dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, extrinsic allergic alveolitis, toxic effects
Mircoberlinia	African zebrawood	Caesalpinaceae	Africa	dermatitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, asthma, toxic effects