

HEALTH HAZARDS & WOOD

Some of the potential health hazards associated with timber use

In Australia all wood dust is now classified as carcinogenic (liable to cause cancer) This list has been compiled to give woodworkers a little bit of an insight into the potential health hazards posed by some of the timbers that are used.

This list is not meant to discourage you from woodworking just as a guide to help identify some of the problems you may be having with your health or may possibly have in the future. It is a wise investment to purchase a good respirator especially if you are a woodturner or do a lot of sanding. You may also need to look at putting a dust extractor into your workshop and even a small particle dust extractor which can eliminate particles as small as 1 micron in size (invisible to the naked eye).

This is by no means a comprehensive list of timbers and their hazards. If you can tell us of more timbers and their hazards we would be grateful, and shall add them to this list. Please feel free to [E-MAIL](#) us with any new info you may have.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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| abura | Tropical Africa | Nausea, eye irritation, giddiness |
| a-dead-finish | Australia | Wood splinter and thorns cause skin irritation, Dust causes dermatitis |
| afara | Central & West Africa | Splinters cause skin inflammation |
| African boxwood | South Africa | Irritation to nose and throat, headache, asthma fainting, shortness of breath, erythema |
| African mahogany | West Africa | Skin irritation, dermatitis, nasal cancer |
| African walnut | Africa | Irritation to mucous membranes, nasal cancer, irritation of alimentary tract |
| afroormosia | Tropical West Africa | Dermatitis, rhinitis, asthma |
| agba | Angola, Zaire, Nigeria | Dermatitis |
| albizzia | South East Asia, Pacific Australia | Irritation to nose, eyes, alimentary tract, nausea, dermatitis |
| alder | Europe, North America | Dermatitis |
| alpine ash | Australia | Irritation to nose, eyes and throat, dermatitis |
| American mahogany | Central America, northern South America, Mexico, plantations in Fiji | Skin irritation, giddiness, vomiting, furunculosis |

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| bibu | Indian Sub-Continent | Sap causes blistering of skin, eye irritation |
| black bean | Australia | Dermatitis, itchiness, irritation of mucous membranes |
| black cherry | USA, Canada, Europe | Wheezing, giddiness |
| blackwood | Australia, plantations in South Africa | Dermatitis, asthma, irritation to nose and throat |
| brazilwood | Northern South America | Headache, nausea, painful swelling of arms, visual disturbances |
| brigalow | Australia | Dermatitis |

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| calophyllum | S.E. Asia, Pacific, New Caledonia, Australia, New Guinea | Dermatitis, kidney damage, irritation to nose and throat |
| caroba | Central and South America, planted in most tropical areas | Dermatitis |
| cocuswood | Central America | Dermatitis |
| cocobolo | Central America, Mexico | Dermatitis, irritation to nose and throat, conjunctivitis, bronchial asthma, nausea |
| coolibah | Australia | Bark and wood dust may cause skin irritation |
| crow's ash | Australia, New Guinea | Dermatitis |
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| dahoma | Africa | Dermatitis, coughing, sneezing, nose bleeding |
| difundu | Africa | Dermatitis |
| djohar | South East Asia, India, Australia | Skin discoloration, eye irritation, keratitis |
| Douglas fir (oregon) | USA, Canada, plantations in New Zealand, Australia & Europe | Dermatitis, nasal cancer, irritation to eyes and throat |
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| East Indian satinwood | India, Pakistan, Ceylon | Dermatitis, headache, swelling of scrotum, irritation of mucous membranes |
| ebony | Africa, Malagasy, Ceylon, South East Asia | Skin inflammation, acute dermatitis, sneezing, conjunctivitis |
| European beech | Europe | Nasal cancer, dermatitis |
| European boxwood | Southern Europe, Asia Minor | Dermatitis, irritation to nose, eyes and throat |
| European elm | Europe | Dermatitis, irritation of mucous membranes, cancer |
| European walnut | Europe, Asia Minor | Dermatitis, nasal cancer |
| eyum | Africa | Irritation of nose and throat, dermatitis |
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| gaboon | Equatorial Africa | Itchy skin, irritation to eyes and nose |
| greenheart | Northern South America | Headache, wheezing, shortness of breath, disturbance of vision, diarrhoea, erythema |
| grey box | Australia | Eczema, irritation of mucous membranes |
| guarea | Tropical West Africa | Dermatitis, asthma, nausea, disturbance of vision, headache |
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| Indian rosewood | South East Asia, India, New Guinea | Dermatitis |
| Ipe | Northern South America | Dermatitis, shortness of breath, headache, |

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| | | disturbance of vision |
| iroko | Tropical West & East Africa | Dermatitis, furunculosis, oedema of eyelids, respiratory difficulties, giddiness |
| ivorywood (South American) | Tropical South America | Dermatitis |
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| jacareuba | Central and South America | Dermatitis, loss of appetite, kidney damage, fainting, insomnia |
| jarrah | Australia | Irritation to nose, throat and eyes |
| keruing | South East Asia | Dermatitis |
| kwila (merbau) | Australia, New Guinea, Pacific Islands, South East Asia | Dermatitis, rhinitis |
| lignum vitae | West Indies, Central & northern South America | Dermatitis |
| limba | Tropical Africa | Splinters may cause festering sores or skin irritation |
| lingue | Africa | Irritation to eyes, nose and throat |
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| mansonina | Tropical West Africa | Dermatitis, nausea, vomiting, nose bleeding, sneezing, giddiness, asthma |
| marking nut | Australia, India | Sap and wood dust may cause skin lesions, eye irritation, nose bleeding |
| massaranduba | Northern South America | Dermatitis |
| meranti (red, white, yellow) | South East Asia | Dermatitis, Irritation to nose, throat and eyes |
| messmate | Australia, plantation in Africa, Europe and South America | Dermatitis, asthma, sneezing, |
| milky mangrove | Australia, South East Asia, Pacific | Sap may cause irritation to eyes, even temporary blindness, headache, burning of throat, blistering of skin |
| Miva mahogany | Australia | Congestion of lungs, eye inflammation, irritation of mucous membranes, headache, nose bleed, loss of appetite |
| molompangady | Malagasy | Dermatitis, sores |
| mountain ash | Australia, plantations in South America, Africa, Europe | Irritation to nose, throat and eyes, dermatitis |
| muhuhu | Africa | Dermatitis |
| mulga | Australia | Wood contains a virulent poisonous principle, used for spear heads by aborigines. Dust may cause irritation to mucous membranes, headache, vomiting |
| muninga | Africa | Bronchitis, asthma, dermatitis |
| myrtle beech | Australia | Irritation to mucous membranes |

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| needlewood | India, South East Asia | Bark causes skin irritation |
| N.Z. white pine | New Zealand | Dermatitis, irritation to nose, throat |
| nkassa | Africa | Headache, giddiness, vomiting, disorders of bowels & stomach, irritation to nose & throat |
| northern silky oak | Australia | Green timber may cause dermatitis |
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| oak (European and Japanese) | Europe, Japan, China | Nasal cancer, dermatitis, sneezing |
| obeche | West Africa | Asthma, sneezing, congestion of lungs |
| odoum | Africa | Dermatitis, irritation to nose and throat |
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| padauk | Africa, New Guinea, S.E. Asia, Andaman Islands | Asthma, dermatitis |
| palisandre wood | South America | Dermatitis |
| parinari | Central and northern South America, Africa, South East Asia, Pacific, New Guinea | Dermatitis |
| pau amarello | South America | Dermatitis |
| Phoenician juniper | Central and southern Europe, northern Africa, South East Russia | Nausea, headache, skin irritation |
| poison walnut | Australia | Bark very irritating to skin. Dust may cause breathing problems, vomiting, giddiness, dermatitis |
| poplar | North America, Europe, east Asia | Asthma, dermatitis, bronchitis |
| Port Oxford cedar | U S A | Dermatitis |
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| ramin | S E Asia, New Guinea, Pacific | Sharp fibres cause skin irritation & infection |
| red cedar | Australia, South East Asia, New Guinea, India, plantations in Central America | Violent headache, giddiness, stomach cramps, asthma, bronchitis, dermatitis, irritation of mucous membranes |
| red lancewood | Northern South America | Dermatitis |
| red peroba | South America | Nausea, sweating, asthma, cramps, drowsiness, fainting, irritation of mucous membranes, dermatitis |
| red siris | Australia | Dermatitis, nose bleed, conjunctivitis, giddiness |
| redwood | North America | Dermatitis, asthma |
| rengas | South East Asia, New Guinea, Malagasy | Bark, sap and wood dust irritating to skin, causing dermatitis, blistering, chronic ulcers |

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| rimu | New Zealand | Irritation to nose, eyes |
| rose butternut | Australia | Dermatitis, conjunctivitis |
| rosewood | South East Asia, New Guinea | Dermatitis, asthma |
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| saffron-heart | Australia, New Guinea | Splinters cause skin Infection. Dust causes dermatitis, congestion of lungs |
| sapale | Africa | Skin irritation, sneezing |
| satine | South America | Excessive salivation, feeling of thirst, nausea |
| South American cedar | Central & South America, Mexico | Dermatitis, irritation to nose and throat, nasal cancer, asthma |
| southern silky oak | Australia, New Caledonia | Sap may cause blistering of skin, inflammation of eyelids. Dust may cause dermatitis |
| spotted gum | Australia, plantations in South America, Africa & Europe | Dermatitis |
| spruce | Nth. America, Japan, Europe | Irritation to nose and throat |
| stinging tree | Australia, Asia | Stinging hairs on leaves and bark have intensely irritating effect on skin, may cause paralysis, breathing problems, severe pain |
| sweetgum | Southern North America | Dermatitis |
| sumac | Asia, Nth & Sth America, Europe | Bark causes blisters, dust may cause dermatitis |
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| talh | Northern Africa | Dermatitis, coughing, irritation to mucous membranes |
| taun | South East Asia, New Guinea | Dermatitis, rhinitis |
| teak | South and South East Asia, plantations in most tropics | Dermatitis, conjunctivitis, over sensitivity to light, swelling of scrotum, irritation to throat& nose, nausea |
| thorny yellowwood | Australia | Lesions made by thorns & splinters take a long time to heal. Dust causes dermatitis, cramp, eye & throat irritation, disturbance of vision |
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| white cedar | Eastern North America | Dermatitis |
| white baltic | Europe | Asthma, skin irritation |
| white cypress pine | Australia | Dermatitis, swelling of eyelids, asthma, irritation of nose and throat, nasal cancer, furunculosis |
| white handlewood | Australia | Sap very irritant to eye, dust causes dermatitis, abdominal pains, nausea |
| white peroba | South America | Dermatitis, asthma |

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| yang | S.E. Asia | Dermatitis, inflammation of mucous membranes, furunculosis, inflammation caused by splinters |
| yellow gum | Australia | Irritation to nose and throat |
| yew | Europe, Asia Minor | Dermatitis, headache, congestion of lungs, nausea, fainting, irritation of alimentary tract, visual disturbances |