

## • TIMBER SPECIES DATASHEET •

# BALSA

## (Ochroma)



★ Wood Type	Hardwood
★ Durability	Class 5 - Perishable
★ Average Service Life	5-10 years (without treatment)
★ Treatability	Easy
★ Moisture Movement	Low
★ Density (mean, Kg/m³)	80-160
★ Texture	Very fine
★ Use(s)	Model Building, Cores for Composite Materials
★ Colour(s)	Pale, creamy color

### Environmental

Balsa wood (*Ochroma pyramidale*) is not typically listed on the IUCN Red List. It is commonly available from responsibly managed sources, and sustainable forestry practices are often in place to ensure responsible harvesting.

### The Tree

Balsa trees are medium to large, reaching heights of up to 30-60 meters. They have straight, cylindrical trunks and produce simple leaves. Balsa trees are known for their valuable timber, which is highly regarded for its exceptional lightness and low density.

### Drying

Balsa wood dries very rapidly and with minimal risk of defects due to its low density. It is important to control the drying process to prevent warping or checking.

### Working Qualities

Balsa wood is exceptionally easy to work with due to its low density and fine texture. It can be cut, shaped, and carved with ease. It is not suitable for load-bearing or high-stress applications but is ideal for model building, lightweight construction, and as a core material in composite structures.

### Distribution

Balsa wood is native to various parts of the world, primarily in Central and South America, including countries like Ecuador and Colombia. It is highly valued for its lightweight and buoyant properties, making it popular for certain specialized applications.

### The Timber

Balsa wood is famous for its exceptional lightness, with a pale, creamy color. It has a very fine texture and typically features a straight grain. The wood is one of the lightest and softest commercially available.

### Strength

Balsa wood is extremely lightweight and not known for its strength in traditional woodworking applications. It is prized for its buoyant properties and is commonly used in lightweight structures and applications that require low density.