

**The Commercial Timbers  
of Tanzania**

**By**

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Moshi, 1967**

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specifications in the building industry and metric unit requirements.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The development of the timber industry in Tanzania requires a good knowledge of the properties and uses of indigenous and exotic tree species. A systematic survey of the indigenous timbers is being undertaken by the Timber Utilisation Research Centre of the Tanzania Forestry Research Institute (TAFORI), including investigation into the anatomy, density, strength, durability and the sawing, machining, seasoning and preservation properties. The results are issued, as they become available, as individual pamphlets in the timbers of Tanzania series.

Since there are over 220 marketable species, the whole survey must necessarily take considerable time, and the many enquiries for the pamphlets and for more general information has long indicated the need for a comprehensive but condensed account of the principal commercial timbers.

The account presented in the text is based largely on original studies made by the then Utilisation Section, but in addition it relies heavily on the work of laboratories overseas and of an earlier generation of East African foresters. The first published source of information on Tanganyika (Tanzanian) woods was the pamphlet "Local Timbers" published by D.K.S. Grant some 60 years ago. At about that time also there began a series of investigations into the properties of local timbers by the Forest Products Research Laboratory in the United Kingdom and the Forest Products Institute in South Africa. The Division of Forest Products in Australia dealt with a number of Tanzanian wood preservation problems, and during the post independence period there were joint studies with the Kenya and Uganda Forest Departments on a

number of matters of common interest. The results from these various sources have always been used freely.

The plan of the book has continued to rely on that used by I.H. Boas (1947) in *The Commercial Timbers of Australia*. The timbers themselves are described in the main section where they are arranged in alphabetical order by botanical names, preceded by sections listing the trade names and common or recommended uses. In the subsequent sections the properties of strength, resistance to impregnation, weight, shrinkage and durability are summarised, together with recommended kiln drying schedules and tables of feature numbers for use with a hand lens key. An index of vernacular names and a bibliography are included at the end.

## TRADE NAMES

The trade names of the commercial timbers of Tanzania are for the most part those adopted in 1962 by agreement between Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. A standard nomenclature was prepared at that time at the request of the East African Timber Advisory Board, and was adopted by the timber trade representatives and the Forest Departments of the three countries. (*Nomenclature of East African Timbers*, ed. C.H. Tack, East African Timber Advisory Board, 1962).

1. The selection of standard trade names was made as follows:- Where a British standard name existed, as published in B.S. 881 & 559:1955, it was adopted.
2. Where no British standard name existed the local name most commonly used in the country of origin was selected.
3. Where any timber was produced in more than one country, and thus had more than one trade name, the standard name selected was that of the country where the largest volume of the timber was marketed.
4. Where vernacular names were misleading or difficult to pronounce the name of the genus was adopted as the standard trade name.
5. The standard trade names listed below are used in the section dealing with commercial uses but botanical names are used throughout the rest of the text. Vernacular names, which tend to confuse through overlapping, are given in the index and with the descriptions of individual timbers.

<b>Standard Trade Name</b>	<b>Botanical Name</b>
adina	<i>Breonadia salicina</i>
afara	<i>Terminalia superba</i>
afroformosa, East African	<i>Pericopsis angolensis</i>