

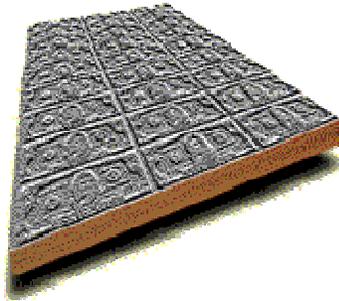
Black Cherry - *Prunus serotina*



Of the many species of cherry, black cherry is the largest by far and for that reason it is the only cherry of commercial value. It is found in scattered areas of the woods and thickets of North America, from the Canadian border south to the Carolinas and west to the Dakotas and Texas. The largest and most abundant black cherry trees grow in the Appalachians of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Most cherry lumber comes from this area. The average height of a black cherry tree is 60

feet to 80 feet with a trunk diameter of 2 to 3 feet. The National Register of Big Trees records the biggest black cherry at 93 feet high with a trunk circumference of 222 inches and a canopy spread of 122 feet. It can be found in Allegan County, Michigan.

The wood from the cherry tree can be described in a single word: beautiful. Its rich red-brown color deepens with age. Small dark gum flecks add to its interest. Distinctive, unique figures and grains are brought out through quarter sawing. It has an exceptionally lustrous appearance that glows. The finish is satiny to the touch. Along with black walnut it is the most prestigious hardwood in America. Its looks are nearly exceeded by its performance. Once dried it is particularly stable, will not warp and possesses a fine close grain that is easy to work.



The wood from American black cherry has always been considered a precious commodity. It was and is reserved for limited, decorative work and for hand-crafted furniture, high-class joinery, custom cabinet-making and architectural interior applications. The Shakers of New England, New York and the mid Atlantic States valued cherry above all woods and used it in much of their woodworking. Unparalleled architects, designers and crafts people, they recognized its versatility and workability with hand tools as well as early machine tools. They knew that it nailed and glued well and finished beautifully. Their harmonious communities house hundreds of exquisitely constructed cherry wood furnishings.

Woodworkers still respect and value black cherry. Besides hand crafted furniture it is used for architectural interiors: finish work, trim and paneling. It is also a wood of choice for precious wood objects: precision musical instruments, clock cases, jewelry boxes, spice containers and tobacco pipes. It is sometimes used in boat interiors; often used for end-grain engravers' blocks. Its availability is generally good as veneer and as lumber in a full range of grades and thickness. It sells in the upper price range.