



***Aspidosperma spp.* (Araracanga group)**

**Family: Apocynaceae**

**Araracanga**

**Other Common Names:** Volador, Pelmax (Mexico), Mylady (Belize), Alcarreto (Panama), Copachi (Colombia), Kromanti kopi (Surinam), Jacamim, Piquia marfim (Brazil).

**Distribution:** The species placed in this group are found in Mexico, through Central America and into the high forests on moist soil in the lower Amazon region, including the Guianas.

**The Tree:** Large canopy tree; unbuttressed; up to 120 ft high, with diameters 24 to 36 in.; straight boles often clear to two-thirds of total tree height.

**The Wood: General Characteristics:** Heartwood bright orange red to reddish brown when freshly cut becoming light pinkish brown or pale yellowish brown upon exposure and drying. Sapwood narrow, white to yellowish, becoming darker on exposure and then not clearly differentiated from the heartwood. Grain straight to irregular; texture medium, uniform; without pronounced odor or taste when dry.

**Weight:** Basic specific gravity (ovendry weight/green volume) averages 0.70 to 0.80; air-dry density about 53 to 64 pcf.

**Mechanical Properties:** (First set of values based on the 2-in. standard, the second on the 1-in. standard.)

Moisture content (%)	Bending strength (Psi)	Modulus of elasticity (1,000 psi)	Maximum crushing strength (Psi)
Green (74)	14,100	2,500	6,650
12%	20,790	2,760	11,110
12% (24)	29,170	3,894	14,480

Janka side hardness for material from Belize was 1,820 lb air-dry, wood from Venezuela tested 3,080 lb. Forest Products Laboratory toughness for Belize timber was 153 in.-lb average for green and air-dry material and 284 in.-lb for the Venezuelan wood (5/8-in. specimen).

**Drying and Shrinkage:** Not difficult to air season but should be dried at a moderate rate to avoid both end- and surface checking. In Surinam 4/4 stock was kiln dried without any difficulties using schedule similar to T7-B3. Shrinkage green to ovendry for Belize material: radial 5.2%; tangential 8.7%; volumetric 14.3%. Volumetric shrinkage about 19% for wood from Guyana and Venezuela.

**Working Properties:** The wood is reported to machine well and rates fair to excellent in all operations; finishes smoothly and takes a high polish.

**Durability:** Heartwood is rated very durable in its resistance to both white-rot and brown-rot fungi (Belize source). However, field trials in Venezuela indicate only moderate durability.

**Preservation:** Heartwood is reported to absorb over 6 pcf of preservative oils using either a hot and cold bath treatment or a pressure-vacuum system; penetration was deep and uniform (test specimens were 20 in. long and not end coated).

**Uses:** Interior work, paneling, furniture, flooring, turnery, heavy construction, railway crossties, and boat framing.

**Additional Reading:** (17), (24), (72), (74)

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24. Food and Agriculture Organization. 1970. Estudio de preinversión para el desarrollo forestal de la Guyana Venezolana. Informe final. Tomo III. Las maderas del área del proyecto. FAO Report FAO/SF: 82 VEN 5. Rome.
72. Vink, A. T. 1965. Surinam timbers: A summary of available information with brief descriptions of the main species of Surinam. Surinam Forest Service, Paramaribo.
74. Wangaard, F. F., and A. F. Muschler. 1952. Properties and uses of tropical woods, III. Tropical Woods 98:1-190.

**From: Chudnoff, Martin. 1984. Tropical Timbers of the World. USDA Forest Service. Ag. Handbook No. 607.**