

This week's
TUTOR'S TIDINGS



Week 10

Friday 8th April, 2016

EBONY

(Diospyros genus)

BEAUTIFUL WOODS of the WORLD

(No 4 in a series of 10)

The name "ebony" is given to a number of species in the *Diospyros* genus that exhibit an **extremely high density and distinct black coloration within the wood**. The trees in this category, which grow mainly in the tropical regions of West Africa and Southeast Asia, grow very slowly and don't reach a very large size at maturity. These factors, combined with a high global demand for the lumber, have resulted in many species being overharvested. A number of ebonyes are under restrictions, and even those that aren't demand a high price.



Ebony is extremely dense and ranges from 2400lbf to 3200lbf on the Janka scale, **making it some of the hardest wood in the world.**

Grain properties vary slightly from species to species, but the wood generally has small, diffuse pores and occasionally interlocked grain. **Every species in the ebony family is highly durable and rot resistant**, but most suffer from significant shrinkage and seasonal movement. These factors make ebony very difficult to work, and the wood is known to quickly dull tools.

Thus, ebony is usually reserved for small and intricate projects such as carvings, musical instruments, and lathe-turned items. **A high, natural oil content makes the wood difficult to glue, but it responds beautifully to finishes and can be sanded to a very high natural shine.**

Although ebony is known for its solid black color, the various species can actually differ greatly in appearance. **Gaboon Ebony** is a very dark, slightly brownish black and **Ceylon Ebony** is an even deeper black with occasional dark brown streaks, whereas **Mun Ebony** and **Macassar Ebony** are lighter brown with tightly spaced solid black growth rings. Even stranger, the species known as **Black & White Ebony** is a pale yellow with random, solid black streaks throughout the wood, as seen below on this pair of hand planes.

The extremely high cost of solid ebony lumber has led many sources to produce veneers, usually from **Macassar** and **Mun Ebony**. These veneers are still rather expensive, and are commonly used for luxury furniture, paneling, and small projects, such as the **Macassar Ebony** jewelry box below.



Although ebony can be prohibitively expensive, it can add some incredible and unique aesthetics to a project. Its difficult working properties and rarity put it in a class of exotic lumber that is usually only sought after by master woodworkers, but a careful hand and a bit of patience can turn a block of ebony into a beautiful heirloom.

IT'S SHOW TIME AGAIN!

Here's our stall set up at the Waikato Show with **CLIVE** and **COLIN** settled in for the day.



The show opened at 10.00am and by 11.00am there seemed to be thousands of school children and their teachers milling around the exhibitions. Sales were extremely slow but the first day of last year's show followed a similar pattern. Hopefully sales will pick up tomorrow and Sunday.

Four people expressed an interest in becoming a member with three of them preferring to join the Thursday evening group.

These expressions of interest will be followed up not long after the show is finished.



There's no shortage of pens for sale.

Our shelves are loaded with turning goodies to buy.





*Goodies galore at
bargain prices!*

CLUB NEWS

1. A new course for the Thursday group started this week and we welcomed the return of **MAURICE BOWKETT**. There are now twelve members for this weekly session and maybe the final two places will be captured by interested people who expressed an interest in becoming a club member during the Waikato Show.
2. A new course for the Tuesday group will begin next week.
3. We have had a cancellation for the upcoming Terry Scott weekend scheduled for Saturday April 30 – Sunday 1st May, so if you are interested in joining this lucky bunch please contact **ROBERT WISELEY**.
4. **ANDRE`** has bought himself a powered respirator and has commented that he should have had one of these devices years ago. Andre` will demonstrate his new acquisition to the Thursday group next week.
5. We have been offered some large “old man” kiwifruit wood so a little of this will be tried to determine its usefulness for turning projects.

OK see you all on Tuesday and Thursday of next week

Clive

