

BACK AND SIDE WOODS

TOP WOODS

BRAZILIAN ROSEWOOD
DALBERGIA NIGRA
Highly resonant, with full, deep basses and brilliant trebles. Rare, expensive, though occasionally available on limited edition and custom models.

EAST INDIAN ROSEWOOD
DALBERGIA LATIFOLIA
Very resonant, with a deep, warm bass. Sources of Supply have been well managed, reliable and consistently high in quality.

HAWAIIAN FLAMED KOA
ACACIA KOA
Bass response slightly less than East Indian Rosewood and treble response a bit less than genuine mahogany. Balanced, clear tone is only outshone by the beauty of its honey-rippled grain.

FIGURED MAHOGANY
SWIETENIA MACROPHYLLA
Beautiful and rare (often quilted) variety of genuine mahogany occurs in a very small percentage of mahogany trees. Though difficult to bend, figured mahogany shares the same tonal properties of the unfigured mahogany.

GENUINE MAHOGANY
SWIETENIA MACROPHYLLA
Much lighter in weight than rosewood, koa or maple. Yields a surprisingly strong, loud sound with an emphasis on clear, bright airy trebles.

FIGURED CLARO WALNUT
JUGLANS CALIFORNICA
JUGLANS HINDSII
Similar in density and grain structure to Hawaiian koa. Walnut yields excellent balance with tonal characteristics that fall between rosewood and mahogany.

QUILTED MAPLE
ACER MACROPHYLLUM
Quilted maple is of the northeastern "bigleaf" variety and is less dense than the European hard maple varieties. The tone is slightly darker and warmer.

FLAMED MAPLE
ACER PLATANOIDES, ACER RUBRUM
Also called Fiddleback or Tiger Maple. Traditional tonewood for violins. Highly dense and reflective, wood yielding a loud, projective, and sustained tone.

BIRDSEYE MAPLE
ACER SACCHARUM
Typically forested from hard maple stands in the midwest and northeast USA. Relatively rare figuring displays tonal properties similar to flamed maple.

CHERRY
PRUNUS SEROTINA
Density and reflectivity approach that of maple. Cherry produces a rich, projective midrange and balance without favoring the bass or treble frequencies. Vibrant, beautiful grain.

WHITE ASH
FRAXINUS AMERICANA
White ash utilized on a limited but extremely popular run of D-16A Martin guitars made between 1987-1990. Tonal character of ash is surprisingly loud and bright, with a strong midrange and crisp bass.

SITKA SPRUCE
PICEA SITCHENSIS
Extremely vibrant providing an ideal "diaphragm" for transmission of sound on any size and style of stringed instrument. Primary top wood for Martin guitars. Chosen for its straight, uniform grain, longevity and tensile strength.

ENGELMANN SPRUCE
PICEA ENGELMANNII
Prized for its similarity in color to European (German) white spruce as well as its extreme lightness in weight which seems to produce a slightly louder, more projective or "open" sound than Sitka spruce.

ITALIAN ALPINE SPRUCE
PICEA ABIES
Trees grow very slowly at such high elevations that the annual rings are generally closely and evenly spaced. Wood is light enough to vibrate freely yet strong enough to withstand the tension of steel strings. Attributes similar to red spruce, it's powerful, clear and vibrant.

RED SPRUCE
PICEA RUBENS
Characteristics similar to high elevation European alpine spruce. Red spruce was abundant in the 1930s and used on Martin guitars of that era. Its extraordinary tone, prized for its projection and tonal clarity, has created a resurgence of demand for "Adirondack" spruce.
Red spruce is also known as Adirondack and Appalachian spruce.

