
STATUS OF IMPORTED SAWN WOOD TRADE IN SRI LANKA

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The present study was carried out to investigate the standards of the imported sawn wood found in building construction and furniture manufacturing sites, and among timber dealers. A questionnaire survey was carried out in the districts of Colombo, Kandy and NuwaraEliya and the collected timber samples from the users and from the timber dealers were examined.

The investigations revealed that the imported hardwoods such as Kempas, Tulang, Bitis, Durian, Tembusu, Burma Teak and some other unidentified species are found in the construction and furniture manufacturing sites and in the market. Results show that authentic Balau or Red Balau were not received by the users or supplied by the timber dealers. Only 42% and all 100% of the users received authentic Kempas and Tulang respectively, whereas 42% and 50% of the suppliers sold authentic Kempas and Tulang respectively.

The density of the unidentified hardwoods received by users as Kempas were found to be comparable to Kempas except one species, which was inferior to Kempas. The unidentified hardwoods received as Balau and Red Balau were found to be medium or heavy hardwoods based on their density. The density of the unidentified timbers that are sold as Kempas was comparable to Kempas. The unidentified hardwoods sold as Balau, Red Balau, Bitis and Kandis were medium or heavy hardwoods based on density determined. Most of the imported hardwoods found in the construction and furniture manufacturing sites and in the market had acceptable quality based on the density, but durability of the unidentified hardwoods was not known for the comparison. Based on results it was found that some of the species supplied by the dealers as high rated timbers, (e.g. Durian) had comparable density values with that of true species (e.g. Balau and Kempas) but these species were less durable compared with the true species. Based on the findings of the present study, it is suggested to develop practicable standards and quality assurance methods for the imported hardwoods.