The four commercially important hardwoods grown and processed in British Columbia are Red alder (Alnus rubra), Bigleaf maple (Acer macrophyllum), Western white birch (Betula papyrifera) and Trembling aspen (Populus tremuloides).

**RED ALDER**
The most plentiful hardwood on the Pacific coast, alder grows in pure stands on moist bottom land in coastal valleys.

**The Wood**
Varies in color from a flesh shade to a light reddish-brown with little distinction between heartwood and sapwood. It has a fine uniform texture and straight grain. Occasional pieces have prominent aggregate rays that show a pleasing pattern when the wood is quarter-sawn.

**Physical properties**
The sapwood is pinkish and the heartwood pinkish-brown. Texture is uniform and occasional pieces have highly figured, wavy grain. Moderately heavy and hard and of medium strength. Not decay resistant.

**Working properties**
Seasons well with little or no degrade. Has good machining, gluing, nail and screw holding, and finishing properties.

**BIGLEAF MAPLE**
British Columbia’s only commercial maple. It grows on Vancouver Island and the adjacent islands and mainland.

**The Wood**
The sapwood is pinkish and the heartwood pinkish-brown. Texture is uniform and occasional pieces have highly figured, wavy grain.

**Physical properties**
Moderately heavy and hard and of medium strength. Not decay resistant.

**Working properties**
Seasons well with little or no degrade. Has good machining, gluing, nail and screw holding, and finishing properties.
WESTERN WHITE BIRCH
One of only two birches found in southern British Columbia. Its range extends from Saskatchewan to the Pacific coast.

The Wood
Usually creamy white, but a brownish central core is often present. The growth-ring pattern is faint, the texture is fine and uniform.

Physical properties
Moderate in weight, strength and hardness. Not decay resistant.

Working properties
Seasons satisfactorily with fairly high shrinkage but little degrade. Good machining qualities and high nail and screw holding ability. Requires care in gluing. Takes a smooth finish.

TREMBLING ASPEN
Canada’s most widely distributed hardwood grows from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast and north to the Yukon.

The Wood
Light in color ranging from a nearly white to greyish-white. It is usually straight-grained with a fine, even texture and a faint growth-ring figuration.

Physical properties
Light in weight with medium strength properties comparable to Western white spruce. High resistance to wear. Not decay resistant.

Working properties
Seasons satisfactorily with moderate shrinkage. Care is required when machining to produce quality surfaces. Moderately easy to glue and holds nails and screws satisfactorily.

Commercial availability
Widely available in all commercial and domestic markets.

Principal uses
Casework, cabinetwork, industrial components, doors, architectural millwork, cutstock, veneer.