

Value of Mexico's Timber

ONE MAY travel over thousands of miles of railway in Mexico and see hardly a tree of commercial timber. The average visitor therefore obtains the impression that Mexico is practically forestless. But as a matter of fact the timber resources of Mexico are vast in extent and value.

Extending nearly from the United States border on the north to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec on the south is an almost unbroken pine and oak forest that has a width ranging from 100 to 300 miles. During the last few years of the Diaz administration many Americans purchased large tracks of the valuable timber and their exploitation of this natural wealth had just begun when war put a stop to operations.

Besides the pine and oak there are many kinds of cabinet woods that grow profusely on big areas in Mexico. It is stated that of the woods to be found in Mexico two-thirds are valuable for furniture and fine wood-work of all kinds, while all with a very few exceptions can be used as ordinary utility woods. In fact, at the present time many woods in Mexico which would bring very high prices if properly introduced to the furniture markets, are now being used for railway ties and construction work. A brief

description of some of the woods follows.

The zapote mamay is a dark, cinnamon brown and very much like walnut. It has about the same grain as mahogany. It is capable of a very high polish and is no more difficult to work than walnut.

The zapote chico, which belongs to the same family as the zapote mamay, is one of the finest woods in Mexico. It is of a clear, deep reddish brown color and takes a very fine polish. It is almost indestructible, for it will stand in fresh and salt water, mud, air and wet soil better than steel or iron. On account of these valuable qualities it is now being used extensively for wharf building. The sea worm will not attack it. It is a very large tree, the trunk being generally fifty feet to the first limb.

The zapotillo colorado belongs to the same family as the two preceding woods. It is very close grained and hard and takes an excellent polish. It has the grain of hickory but looks like a light colored oak. This tree often grows three feet in diameter and generally affords some fifty feet of trunk without knots.

The zapotillo blanco is a beautiful white wood with a slight yellowish tinge. It is very even in color and

somewhat heavier than white pine, but of much finer grain. It is an excellent wood for inside house finishings.

Palo maria very much resembles mahogany in color, grain and weight. It is of a uniform light brown color. It stands wet well and is much esteemed by the people of the regions where it grows for building purposes. It is a large tree, being from fifty to 100 feet to the first limb, with a trunk quite clear of knots.

Red cedar is one of the best known woods in Mexico. It is of an exceedingly even color and fine grain, and is extensively used for making cigar boxes and lead pencils. In Mexico it is also used for the construction of chests and bureaus, as the scent of the cedar drives away moths and insects that destroy clothes.

Macaya resembles hickory very much in color, grain, hardness and weight. It is used by the Indians for the manufacture of wagon stock.

Palo colorado is of a rich, light coffee color. It is a little heavier than mahogany and of a very close grain. It takes a very high polish easily. This is a fine furniture wood.

Corallillo is so called on account of the supposed resemblance of the color of the wood to coral. It is much the same as the palo colorado in color and grain. It is also an excellent furniture wood and capable of a fine polish.

Granadilla is a kind of rosewood of

a rich reddish brown color with seal brown markings in the form of wavy lines. It is heavier and more compact than mahogany. It is one of the most promising of the undeveloped woods of Mexico.

Gateado is one of the most peculiar woods in Mexico. It looks somewhat like rosewood, but is much heavier. Its chief beauty, and it is one of the most beautiful of woods, consists in the curiously marked variations of colors which the grain of the wood presents. It is of a deep yellow color heavily marked with seal brown and light brown stripes of an irregular form and size. All the wood requires to finish it is polish, for it has all the natural colors that are produced in most cases in the United States by the use of stains and fillings of different kinds.

Balsamo is another of the good hardwoods of Mexico. It is light brown color with a grain like rosewood. It is of a solid color, makes good furniture lumber and would be excellent for hardwood house trimmings.

Guapage is a very hard compact wood having the grain and density of ironwood. It is very heavy and of a solid red color. It is capable of a high polish and would make excellent furniture wood.

Huisach resembles hickory in color, grain, weight and density. This is one of the best general woods in Mexico. It is used in making carriages and wagons, and other things which require a combination of strength, polish and weight.

Jicaco is like maple in grain, density and weight, but is slightly more reddish in color.

Rabo de lagarto (alligator's tail) is of a cinnamon brown, running often into a yellowish brown. On account of its even color, its easiness in working and its beautiful variegated grain this wood makes fine lumber for trimmings of all kinds, including fanex panels.

Campanillo is of about the same grain and color as dark maple, but slightly lighter. It is easily worked and, like rabo de lagarto, makes fine house trimmings, wainscoting, etc.

Palo blanco is of about the grain and density of red pine. It ranges in color from a brownish white to a deep cream color. On account of its beautiful wavy grain it makes fine furniture and house trimmings.

Palo de agua looks like white pine but is very much finer in grain. It has a beautifully marked grain. On account of its being easily worked it can be used to advantage in house trimmings and the back parts of furniture.

Sombrerete is another fine Mexican hardwood. It looks like checked maple, but it is slightly lighter in weight and darker in color. The wood has brown markings on a light background. It would be excellent for furniture.

Tepesuchil is a beautiful wood to look at but is somewhat difficult to work on account of its uneven grain. It is about as heavy as soft maple and has much the grain of hard maple. It is of a brownish yellow in color.

Jonote is almost as light as cork. It is used by the Mexicans for razor strops and rafts. It is from one to two feet thick. It is believed it would make excellent paper pulp, and on account of its rapid growth it could be planted for this purpose.

A HANDY TREE.

DID YOU ever hear of a thread-and-needle tree? It must be rather a handy tree to have growing in the back yard, especially when there are boys in the house with buttons coming off about every other minute.

This strange tree grows in nearly all tropical countries, and in some places nearer home where the climate is warm. It gets its name by which we know it from the curious formation of its leaves. At the tip of each leaf there is a sharp thorn, which is the needle. If you grasp it firmly and pull it out, there you are with a needle already threaded for your sewing. This fiber thread is very strong, and the Mexicans use it for weaving a coarse kind of cloth, as well as for sewing.

The leaves of the tree they use for roofing their houses, instead of tiles, and a fine roof it makes them, strong and water-proof—just the sort of a roof they need when the rain comes down in sheets.



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