



# A M E R I C A N HARDWOOD NEWS

A newsletter for the Middle East, North Africa & India from the American Hardwood Export Council

April 2003

## AHEC Launches Newsletter

Starting with this issue, AHEC's London-based European office will publish a regular newsletter for those involved in trading, manufacturing or specifying hardwoods in the Middle East, North Africa and India.

*American Hardwood News* is designed to provide up-to-date information on AHEC's activities in the region, to launch new technical publications and to focus on species, products, applications and grading of American hardwood. It will also include relevant market information and the latest available US hardwood export statistics for the region.

We hope that it will be both useful and informative and would welcome any feedback that you may wish to give.

## Technical & Sustainable: Two New Websites

Redesigned, expanded and now with an on-line technical guide to American hardwood species and grading, [www.ahec-europe.org](http://www.ahec-europe.org) is up and running.



## SEE INSIDE FOR:

### Two New Websites

[www.ahec-europe.org](http://www.ahec-europe.org)  
[www.sustainablehardwoods.info](http://www.sustainablehardwoods.info)

### 2002 Export Statistics Update

Record year for US Veneer  
Lumber exports to India showing promise

### AHEC Middle East Grading Seminars

Two successful events in Bahrain & Dubai, more set for the future

### Forthcoming Events

In the Middle East & India

### A Question of Grading

Regular Q & A feature on NHLA Grading Rules

### Species in Focus

American Tulipwood

Originally launched on the web in 2000, AHEC's European website has now undergone a thorough re-working and has been translated into 4 major European languages. Although the main function of the site is to allow users to order AHEC's free technical publications, such as the *Guide to American Hardwoods* and *The Illustrated Guide to American Hardwood Lumber Grades*, the site now includes an on-line technical section. This provides users with quick access to detailed information on 22 US hardwood species – their main characteristics, working properties and availability – as well as a summary of the National Hardwood Lumber Association's (NHLA) rules for the measurement and grading of hardwood lumber. (continued overleaf)

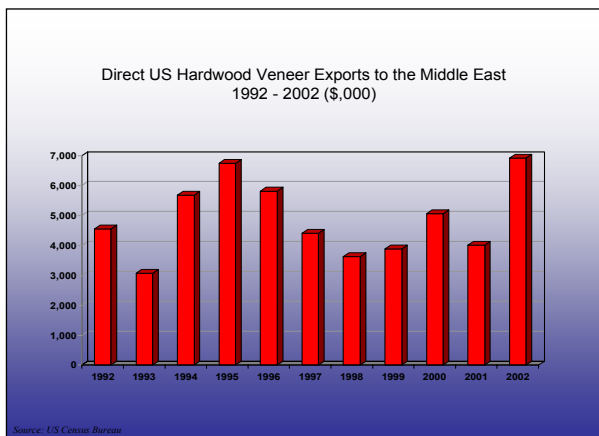
## US Hardwood Exports Show Record Year

### Middle East:

2002 was a good year overall for US hardwood exports to the Middle East, but the biggest increase was seen in veneer exports. Total US hardwood lumber and veneer exports to the region reached a value of \$44.1 million, a 7% increase on 2001. Veneer exports accounted for most of this increase and were up to \$6.9 million from \$4.0 million in 2001, their highest export value to date.

Of course, these figures only account for direct exports from the USA and not for imports from Europe or internal Middle Eastern trade. If these figures were also taken into account, the overall Middle East consumption of US hardwood veneer in 2002 could have been well in excess of \$10 million.

The most significant market for US hardwood lumber is Saudi Arabia and in 2002, direct exports from the US reached 24,000 cubic metres, which accounted for 44% of exports to the entire region. The next biggest markets are the UAE and Israel, which imported around 8,000 cubic metres each. Total US hardwood lumber exports to the region reached 54,000 cubic metres in 2002, a 3% increase on the previous year.

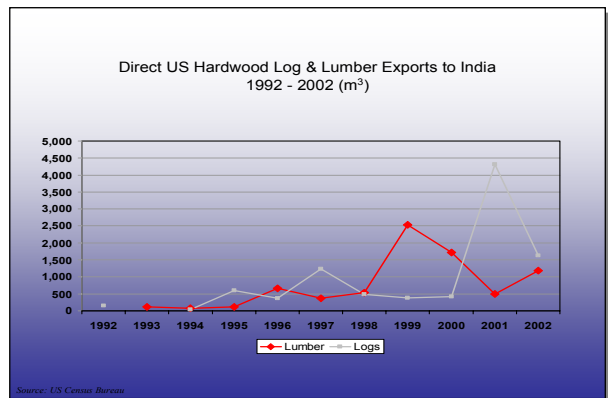


In terms of species, red oak continues to dominate both lumber and veneer exports to the region, but in 2002, significant increases were seen in the export of ash and maple. This would suggest that ash may well be staging a comeback, while anecdotal evidence shows that increasing quantities of soft maple are being used as a viable alternative to beech from Europe.

The outlook for 2003 looks promising, as many of the Gulf markets continue to enjoy a construction boom and particularly in the hotel and leisure sectors. However, the region's current political climate will have to stabilise in order to sustain the current levels of economic growth.

### India:

US hardwood exports to India showed some promise in 2002, with direct shipments of lumber reaching 1,181 cubic metres; over twice the volume in the previous year. However, in US veneer, the picture was a little less encouraging, with exports dropping from \$1.1 million in 2001 to \$400,000 last year.



Of course, India's market for hardwoods is vast and growing, with an expanding economy and the resultant development of local manufacturing for a rapidly increasing consumer base. However, high import tariffs on hardwood lumber continue to hinder a significant increase in US exports to India.

In hardwood logs, however, India has been the focus of a number of exporters in the US for some time. In 2001, US hardwood log exports reached over 4,000 cubic metres. This changed last year, however, with a drop to 1,600 cubic metres. It is hoped that this decrease, combined with the increase in lumber exports may well indicate that importers are beginning to look more and more towards kiln-dried lumber to cater to the needs of their rapidly modernising furniture industry.

## Two New Websites

*(continued from page 1)*

The second of AHEC's latest web developments is designed to provide anyone trading in, manufacturing or specifying American hardwoods with all the environmental credentials they may

need to assure their customers of its sustainability as a raw material.

According to data published as part of the US Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) Assessment, over the last 50 years the inventory of hardwoods standing in US forests increased by more than 90% as harvesting levels remained well below the level of growth. The US hardwood standing timber inventory around 10,000 million m<sup>3</sup> and is growing at a rate of more than 200 million m<sup>3</sup> per year (before harvesting), despite high levels of domestic hardwood consumption in the US and growing exports worldwide.

Visit [www.sustainablehardwoods.info](http://www.sustainablehardwoods.info) for more information.

## Middle East Seminars

Bahrain and Dubai were the venues for two American hardwood seminars given by AHEC in February 2003 for those involved in trading in or manufacturing with hardwoods.

David Venables, AHEC's European Director presented an overview of the US hardwood resource, the species available from the USA and then gave a detailed insight into the NHLA rules for measurement and grading of American hardwood lumber.

Further seminars are planned for the future and AHEC also plans to host similar events for architects and interior designers or anyone involved in specifying hardwoods for interiors and furniture.

We would welcome any feedback you may wish to give on such events and also would consider any suggestions you may have for hosting targeted seminars for specific audiences or markets.

## A Question of Grading

Q: What is the difference between net tally and gross or green tally?

A: Net tally is the actual board footage of kiln dried lumber measured *after* kiln drying, while gross or green tally is the actual board footage measured *before* kiln drying. When kiln dried lumber is sold on a gross or green tally basis, the

## Forthcoming Events

The Hotel Show, Dubai	19–21 May 2003
Saudi Building & Interiors, Jeddah	25–29 May 2003
INDEX Dubai	7–11 Oct 2003
Big 5, Dubai	29 Nov–3 Dec 2003
Indiawood, Bangalore	6–10 Feb 2004

buyer can expect to receive approximately 7% less board feet because of shrinkage in the kiln drying process.

For more detailed information on measurement and grading, see *The Illustrated Guide to American Hardwood Lumber Grading*, or contact the NHLA.

## What is AHEC?

A note for those who may not know us personally or may not be entirely sure of what we do or where to contact us:

In its capacity both as the leading export trade association for the US hardwood industry and as a generic promoter of American hardwood species and products – lumber, veneer, flooring and moulding –, the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) has been providing technical information and sources of supply for American hardwoods to architects, designers, manufacturers, traders and consumers all over the world for 15 years. From its European Office in London, AHEC has maintained a constant programme of educational, technical and promotional activities right from the European Union across to the Middle East and India.

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## SPECIES IN FOCUS:

### American tulipwood

(*Liriodendron tulipifera*)



**Other names:** Yellow poplar (USA), tulip poplar (USA), canary whitewood

American tulipwood is very widely available and currently accounts for around 9% of the total hardwood resource growing in the hardwood forests of the eastern United States. Tulipwood is known by the US hardwood industry as yellow poplar, but this is a somewhat misleading label dating back to the time of the first European settlers and based on nothing more than the fact that the tree grows very tall and without much spread of branches. In fact, it is not botanically related to the poplars (*Populus*) and is far superior in many ways to a true poplar.

Tulipwood is a member of the *Magnoliaceae* family and is frankly superior in strength, hardness and finishing properties to any of the *Salicaceae* (poplar and willow) family. This, combined with the fact that it has an extremely high strength to weight ratio – based on recent structural research carried out in the UK – make for a very versatile, inexpensive and high quality joinery timber.



The natural colour variations between heartwood and sapwood have restricted its use in some applications. Colour selection is possible, however, and, of course, for any stained or painted use it is an ideal option. A good example of stained tulipwood can be found at the Emirates Towers Hotel in Dubai, where it has been used to clad the columns in the impressive lobby.



#### Physical Properties

<b>Specific Gravity:</b> (12% M.C.)	<b>0.42</b>
<b>Average Weight:</b> (12% M.C.)	<b>449 kg/m³</b>
<b>Average Volumetric Shrinkage:</b> (Green to 6% M.C.)	<b>9.8%</b>
<b>Modulus of Elasticity:</b>	<b>10,894 MPa</b>
<b>Hardness:</b>	<b>2402 N</b>

Most US exporters are able to offer tulipwood to their customers and, with its ease of drying, relatively large tree size and the tendency to contain less knots than species such as oak, it is available in a good range of specifications.

#### Main uses

Light construction, furniture, interior joinery, kitchen cabinets, doors, panelling, mouldings, edged-glued panels, plywood (USA), turning and carving.

For more detailed information on American tulipwood and 23 other American hardwood species, order your free *Guide to American Hardwoods* or visit our website.