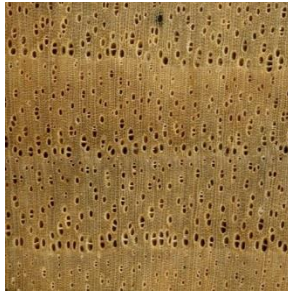


## Wood of The Month

### *Diospyrus virginiana* – Persimmon



In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, speaking of persimmon fruit, Captain John Smith near Jamestown said, “If it be not ripe, it will draw a man’s mouth awry with much torment.” If you’ve ever been tricked into eating or accidentally gotten an unripe persimmon you know exactly what he means. The fruit of persimmon, which is about ¾ to 1 ½ inches long and wide, globe-shaped, orange to orange-purple, often with a whitish coating with an astringent and pucker to taste when green; but when ripe is sweet and edible. The ripe fruit is used to make jam, pudding and nut bread. The dried leaves can be made into a tea rich in vitamin C. At one time, the tea from persimmon was used as a folk remedy for stomachaches, heart-burn, diarrhea, and dysentery.

Persimmon, *Diospyrus virginiana*, is a member of the ebony family and is known as ‘white ebony’. It is the only member of the ebony family to be found in the US. The small to medium sized tree grows in the central and southern states of the US where it is known as; bara bara, boa wood, butter wood, possum wood and Virginia date palm. Persimmon has a very small heartwood core with variegated streaks of yellow-brown, orange-brown, dark brown or black. But the wider sapwood is off-white with a gray tint, and straight grained with a fine even texture. It is the sapwood that is valuable and useful. It was once the standard for golf club heads and used for, textile shuttles, bobbins, shoe lasts, tool handles, spools, musical instruments and miscellaneous articles of turnery because of its toughness, hardness and ability to retain a smooth surface even after prolonged use. It can be difficult to work, but turns well and finishes to a high polish. It does not glue well but is high in shock resistance and the fibers do not fray.



Persimmon can be difficult to find. It is not available commercially and can be expensive. It can be found in ‘out-of-the-way places’ such as small local sawmills. The wood is difficult to season and shrinks when drying.

You can read more about Persimmon at; [Persimmon on the Wood-database](#) and [Persimmon on Wikipedia.org](#) .

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