



NDF Workshop Case Studies
WG 1 – Trees
CASE STUDY 5 SUMMARY
Caesalpinia echinata
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Brazilwood (*Caesalpinia echinata*) in Brazil

AUTHORS:

Elena Mejía
Ximena Buitrón

Brazilwood (*Caesalpinia echinata*, Fabaceae) is the national tree of Brazil, where it is commonly known as pau brasil. Extracted since the 16th Century from natural forests, this species is highly endangered. Harvests have been illegal in Brazil since 2001, and the species was included on CITES Appendix II in September 2007. However, exploitation continues due to its extremely dense hardwood ideal for making bows for stringed musical instruments. Estimated annual worldwide demand is approximately 200 m³.

Brazilwood is a late-secondary canopy tree whose natural habitat is mainly semi-deciduous seasonal forests occurring on sandy marine soils of Brazil's coastal Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica) between Rio Grande do Norte and Rio de Janeiro. Despite its high profile, little information exists regarding Brazilwood's ecology and life history, with limited data available on distribution, species variation, and population size. It is a medium-sized tree, semi-deciduous, and slow-growing.

The main threats to Brazilwood are deforestation and illegal logging for exports. Deforestation of the Mata Atlântica has been accelerated by urban sprawl, agriculture and timber harvesting. Some regions have suffered considerable impact in recent years through tourism development. Detailed figures on the proportion of deforestation in the remaining forest areas where *C. echinata* occurs are unavailable.

Principal importing nations include the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, Switzerland, Korea, Japan and the USA. Within this importers framework the International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative (IPCI) was created. The IPCI has supported the 'Pau-Brasil Program' through CEPLAC (Executive Commission of the Cocoa Planting Plan) with assistance from IBAMA (the CITES Management and Scientific Authority in Brazil) and the Rio de Janeiro Botanic Garden since 2004. The Program's objectives include promoting conservation actions, production research, environmental education, and sustainable use of *C. echinata*.

Brazilwood cannot be legally harvested at present. All currently held material should be declared and updated in the Forestry Origin Document. This system is used for monitoring forest-derived products, allowing control of Brazilwood-derived products from point of origin until their export location. Current Brazilwood trade is permitted only for declared material. No possibility exists for approval of management plans for Brazilwood until a range-wide inventory is completed. Timber that is currently available for export was harvested before Brazilwood's Appendix II listing in 2007; these volumes are considered pre-convention.

The extent and quantity of surviving Brazilwood stocks are unknown. According to IBAMA, hidden volumes remain available for illegal trade in spite of legal requirements that timber companies declare quantities of *C. echinata* under ownership. While illegal logging is known to occur, the extent of such practice has not been determined because timber merchants are reluctant to divulge this information.

Brazil does not allow extraction from natural forests and no plantations are known. The Brazilian government recognizes the need for adequate data on surviving natural stocks and other biological information before NDF can be provided. Steps currently underway to obtain the necessary information are outlined in this case study.