HMR Import Newsletter™

A part of Fastmarkets

Volume 11
Issue 9
September 2026

CURRENT TRENDS

Due to Iranian drone attacks, Saudi Arabia shut down its East-West pipeline on September 11, which supplies 4% of the world's crude oil.

9.6 MMBF of hardwoods were imported to the US from France through July, a 101% y-o-y increase.

Lead Story:

As Demand Cools, Increasing Ocean Freight and New US Border Agents Squeeze Timely Supply of Imported Hardwoods

By Ben Stanley

Between increasing ocean freight rates, foreign port delays, and inexperienced US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents checking incoming shipments, those importing hardwoods into the United States are experiencing a near "perfect storm" of challenges right now.

The ongoing war between the US and Iran, and its resulting impact on global energy prices, is behind the ocean freight headaches. Saudi Arabia shut down a major crude oil pipeline in mid-September due to Iranian drone and missile attacks. Given that the pipeline

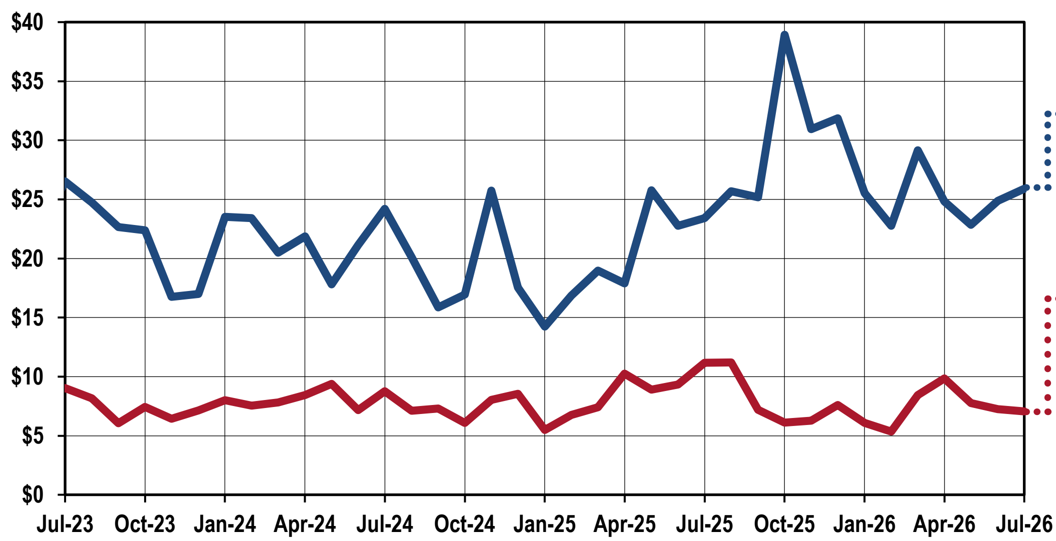
continue

US Imports of Meranti Lumber

Click Here

Monthly US Import Values of Tropical and Temperate Hardwood Lumber from non-Canadian Sources

Million US Dollars



Tropical Value +26% YTD 2026 vs. 2025

Temperate Value -13% YTD 2026 vs. 2025

Source: US International Trade Commission
Graph: HMR

Leading Tropical Species	– Board Feet – Jul-25	Jul-26	Chg %	– Board Feet – YTD 2025	YTD 2026	Chg %
Ipé	804,606	760,965	-5%	2,919,717	5,625,889	+93%
Sapele	1,208,816	523,693	-57%	7,269,421	5,249,219	-28%
Keruing	755,457	744,865	-1%	4,831,875	4,392,074	-9%
Genuine Mahogany	345,739	1,581,672	+357%	3,181,563	4,048,877	+27%
African Mahogany	210,155	265,236	+26%	1,773,185	2,207,477	+24%
Meranti	269,897	311,420	+15%	1,988,000	2,046,471	+3%
Balsa	377,093	272,863	-28%	2,451,105	1,779,116	-27%
Spanish Cedar	246,170	147,448	-40%	1,324,486	724,527	-45%
Teak	133,042	78,385	-41%	1,152,040	577,503	-50%
Jatoba	17,795	51,268	+188%	138,126	431,750	+213%
Iroko	88,977	27,964	-69%	288,963	309,725	+7%
Virola	257,186	10,169	-96%	1,098,230	204,223	-81%
Andiroba/Padauk	2,119	0	-100%	116,518	69,911	-40%
Aniegre	10,169	0	-100%	16,101	13,982	-13%
Tropical Total*	6,868,601	7,681,257	+12%	45,830,782	44,917,708	-2%

Leading Temperate Species	– Board Feet – Jul-25	Jul-26	Chg %	– Board Feet – YTD 2025	YTD 2026	Chg %
Beech	2,147,312	2,627,364	+22%	14,364,277	13,890,581	-3%
White Oak	3,026,489	722,409	-76%	7,502,456	11,979,270	+60%
Poplar	127,957	90,672	-29%	360,569	733,001	+103%
Baltic/Russian Birch	247,441	59,318	-76%	1,850,722	704,189	-62%
Ash	22,032	13,982	-37%	211,850	599,536	+183%
Birch (Other)	197,444	124,568	-37%	1,718,527	505,898	-71%
Temperate Total*	9,847,635	7,410,089	-25%	48,556,867	49,704,247	+2%

Leading Countries	– Board Feet – Jul-25	Jul-26	Chg %	– Board Feet – YTD 2025	YTD 2026	Chg %
Brazil	2,963,782	4,239,966	+43%	17,755,572	19,754,589	+11%
Germany	2,153,243	2,694,308	+25%	14,516,809	14,266,403	-2%
France	1,744,373	611,399	-65%	4,782,302	9,595,534	+101%
Uruguay	1,860,890	1,285,082	-31%	6,297,029	9,031,166	+43%
Malaysia	876,212	1,093,993	+25%	5,844,518	6,317,791	+8%
Cameroon	990,187	592,756	-40%	5,671,648	5,022,116	-11%
China	717,748	395,312	-45%	3,961,171	3,654,836	-8%
Indonesia	726,222	593,604	-18%	8,878,210	3,378,160	-62%
Congo (DROC)	150,837	330,062	+119%	1,512,185	2,030,370	+34%
Congo (ROC)	443,614	137,703	-69%	4,039,556	1,922,327	-52%
World Total*	16,716,236	15,091,347	-10%	94,387,649	94,621,955	0%

*Data in tables exclude Canada
Source: US International Trade Commission

Market Commentary cont'd

supplies around 4% of global crude oil, the tightened energy supply adds to an already pricey scenario for importers.

Several contacts told *HMR*/Fastmarkets they expected ocean freight rates to rise over the coming months, with one hearing that increases of $1,000 per container are likely. Rates out of Asian countries are seen as most volatile, followed by shipments via containers out of South America. West African shipments are usually the last to be impacted by any oil price fluctuations. The high cost of diesel domestically shows that the problems do not end once imported products arrive in the US, either.

"People have thrown the phrase 'Covid-style ocean freight' around recently," an import contact said. "The difference now compared to the pandemic is the demand was so good then that people were happy to swallow the high rates. Now, it is more difficult to pass them on."

While the usual delays at country-of-origin ports, especially in West Africa, are noted by importers, a growing holdup at arrival in the US is new CBP agents checking shipments. The Trump Administration has bulked up inspections of inbound containers at American ports over recent months, but a lack of inspecting experience is causing lengthier delays in container releases. "[It's] due to the knowledge barrier," one importer said.

continue

Sel&Btr (Net)

Spanish Cedar (African stock)		
4/4	4225	(3850-4520)
5/4	4250	(3875-4550)
6/4	4300	(3900-4580)
8/4	4340	(3900-4600)

Jatoba		
4/4	4100	(3750-4400)
5/4	4230	(3850-4500)
8/4	4500	(4050-4750)

African Mahogany (Cameroon/Ghana stock)		
4/4	3830	(3620-**4025**)
5/4	3850	(3640-**4045**)
6/4	3870	(3660-**4065**)
8/4	3890	(3680-4150)

Genuine Mahogany (South/Central American stock)		
4/4	7000	(**6650**-7300)
5/4	7100	(6650-7425)
6/4	7140	(6690-7565)
8/4	7175	(6725-7650)

Sel&Btr (Net)

Sapele			
4/4	**3865**	**+75**	(3555-**4075**)
5/4	**3890**	**+75**	(3580-**4100**)
6/4	**3915**	**+75**	(3625-**4105**)
8/4	**3940**	**+75**	(3640-**4150**)

Sipo/Utile		
4/4	4175	(3975-4450)
5/4	4205	(4005-4450)
6/4	4235	(4015-4460)
8/4	4270	(4025-4490)

Ipé Decking ($ per linear foot)		
1x6	5.11	(4.65-5.64)
5/4x6	6.69	(6.05-7.29)

- » **All decking is S4S, E4E**
- » **Actual sizes 3/4" x 5-½" & 1" x 5-½"**
- » **Lengths: 30% 8'-10', 40% 12'-14', 30% 16'-20'**

Prices are in US dollars per thousand board feet for kiln dried lumber measured after kiln drying ("net tally"), FOB US or Canadian import yard. Prices are presented only as a guide.

Market Commentary cont'd

While agents' understanding of regulations will improve the longer they are in the field, most importers are factoring in slower-than-usual turnarounds at ports over the coming months.

USITC trade data show that imports of hardwoods from non-Canadian sources were down 10% in July compared to the same month last year, though total year-to-date imports of 94.6 million board feet (MMBF) are around the same as 2025.

Given the challenging import picture, contacts are saying they are "buckling up" for the last few months of what has been a disruptive year for international trade.

"With the Canada-US trade war and other tariffs, summer was not restful," one importer said. "I hope fall is calmer, but I doubt it."

> **"Several importers told HMR/Fastmarkets they do not expect production of Ipé to be as high in Brazil in 2027 as it has been in 2026."**

Tropical Hardwood Lumber Demand
Conversations with import contacts in recent weeks often circled back to the macroeconomic factors that have slowed demand for tropical hardwoods. Due to increased oil prices, inflation has been a major issue for American households throughout 2026. As of this writing, the Federal Reserve appeared highly likely to raise the federal funds rate at its September 16 meeting, a measure intended to curb inflation.

Traditionally, demand for tropical hardwoods is somewhat sheltered from headwinds in the broader economy, since wealthier consumers that are mostly likely to use products derived from tropical woods are similarly sheltered from those headwinds. This year, however, even wealthy consumers are struggling with sticky inflation, and higher interest rates are restricting access to money that many require for larger household projects.

Demand for tropical hardwoods was not especially strong in July and August, and contacts indicate further cooling in September. Of the species about which *HMR* surveys importers, only Sapele is enjoying healthy interest from buyers at present.

Tropical Hardwood Lumber Supply
Though most importers have enough to accommodate bumps in demand, inventory levels are mixed for various importers. Cautious purchasing over the first six months of the year, coupled with decent July and August business for some sellers, is "leading to some tightness in prompt inventories," one importer told *HMR*/Fastmarkets.

Increased ocean freight rates and delays at some foreign ports are adding to the tightness. Delays out of Douala, Cameroon, are known to be particularly bad, which will impact the supply of African Mahogany. "Cargo is sitting for [up to] four months, waiting for pickup," the same importer said, adding that he expects shortages this fall.

Sawmills in West Africa are still recovering from summer flooding, likely ensuring receipts from the region will be down in the year's final quarter.

Decking Markets
As summer temperatures give way to cooler fall readings, September represents the end of prime decking installation season in the US. Demand has been relatively steady this summer. At the same time, it has been a bumper year for Ipé arrivals from Brazil when compared to anemic levels the prior year. Published prices for 1x6 and 5/4x6 Ipé decking were relatively steady throughout summer, and reported prices lead to no changes to the listings or ranges this month.

One trusted decking contact reported a 3% to 4% falloff in prices in Brazil over the last couple

Market Commentary cont'd

of months, which he said will likely impact prices in the US early next year. Several importers told *HMR*/Fastmarkets they do not expect production of Ipé to be as high in Brazil in 2027 as it has been in 2026. "I'm expecting mediocre production," one contact said.

Despite that, the US remains the preferred destination for Brazilian suppliers due to relative regulatory ease compared to Europe. Other species like Cumaru and Garapa were not discussed much by decking contacts this month, though demand continues to expand for thermally modified decking products.

Species Trends

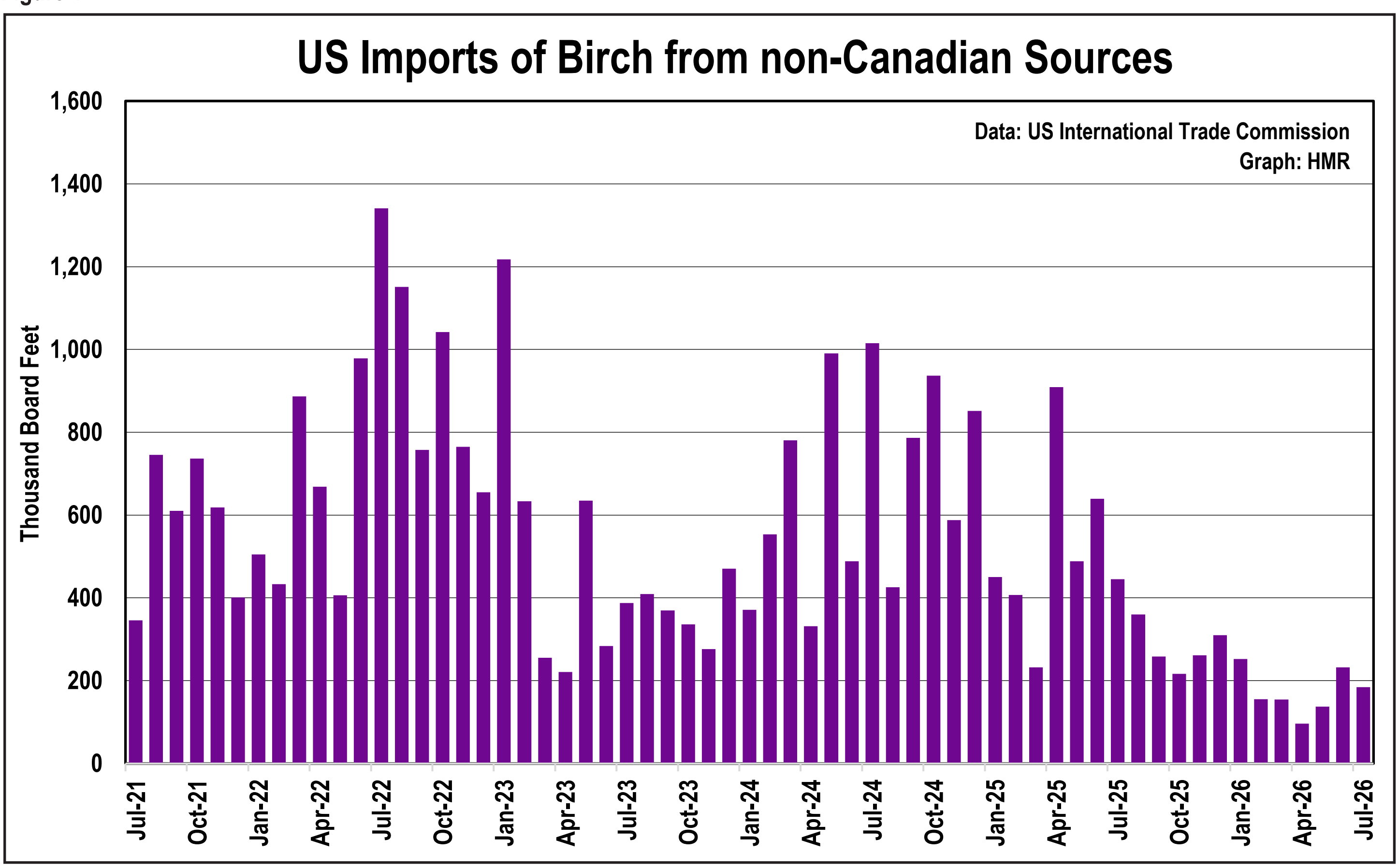
Spanish Cedar
From a supply perspective, the volume of Spanish Cedar arriving in the US was down 45% on the year through July. Despite lower supply, demand is sluggish. Though one contact described interest as "okay," no survey respondents pointed to Spanish Cedar as a species customers are inquiring much about. The listings and ranges stand in this edition.

(See page 3 for price listings and prevailing ranges for Spanish Cedar and five other tropical hardwood lumber species as well as for Ipé decking.)

Jatoba
Larger shipments of Jatoba continued to arrive in the US in July. More than 430,000 board feet (BF) of the species have arrived in the US so far this year, representing a 213% increase over the same time in 2025. Demand for Jatoba remains

continue

Figure 1



Market Commentary cont'd

on the slower side of steady, however, with thicker stock performing the best.

Despite this, reported prices show a market that is well balanced between buyers' interest and availability. All listings and ranges remain unmoved this month.

African Mahogany
Even though early summer flooding in West Africa impacted a large number of sawmills cutting African Mahogany, receipts in July and year-to-date arrivals show that plenty is entering the US in 2026.

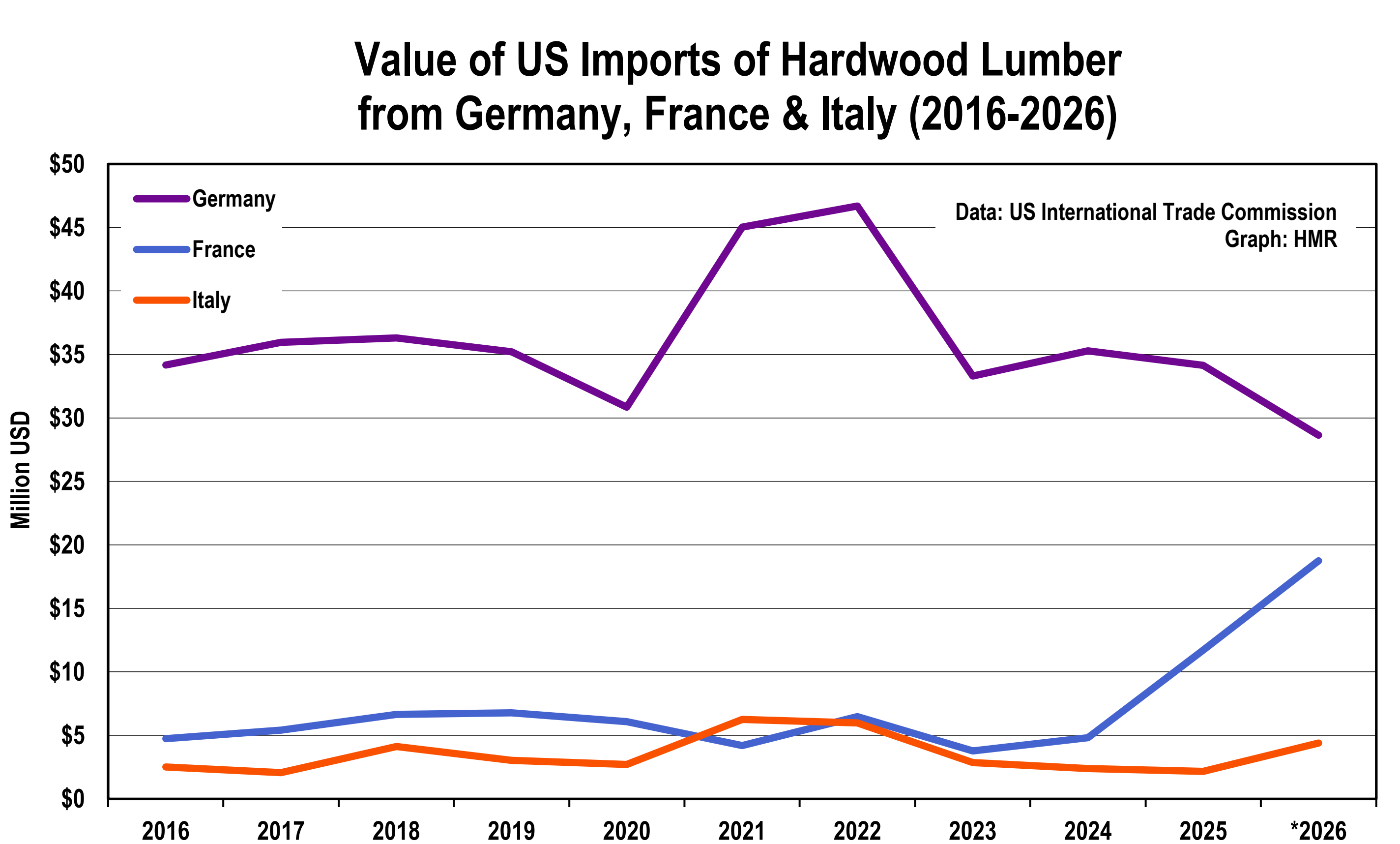
Outside of 8/4 African Mahogany, which one importer was running low on, stateside interest in the species remains relatively muted. Another importer said sales have slowed, with buyers using Eucalyptus or other woods. "We actually had to sell some off to another importer," he said. Reported prices drive reductions to the upper ends of the ranges for 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4 in this edition.

Genuine Mahogany
Demand for Genuine Mahogany has been slow for most importers throughout this year, though many commented that interest picked up last month. The wind seemed to disappear from the sails again in the late summer, with no contacts mentioning it when asked what species are moving well.

Reported prices advance the bottom end of the range for 4/4 stock, but, otherwise, there are no changes to the listings and range numbers.

continue

Figure 2



Market Commentary cont'd

Sapele
All import contacts mentioned the popularity of Sapele. "This summer brought in a high demand for [6/4] Sapele," one importer said. "[But] all Sapele has been moving at a faster pace for the summer months than expected."

The surge in demand is coming largely from door and window manufacturers, who often prefer Sapele for its hardness. This higher level of interest is impacting certain thicknesses more than others, with inventories of 4/4 quartersawn and flatsawn stock running low for some. "No one is able to offer this in larger volumes at the moment," one importer said of 4/4 flatsawn.

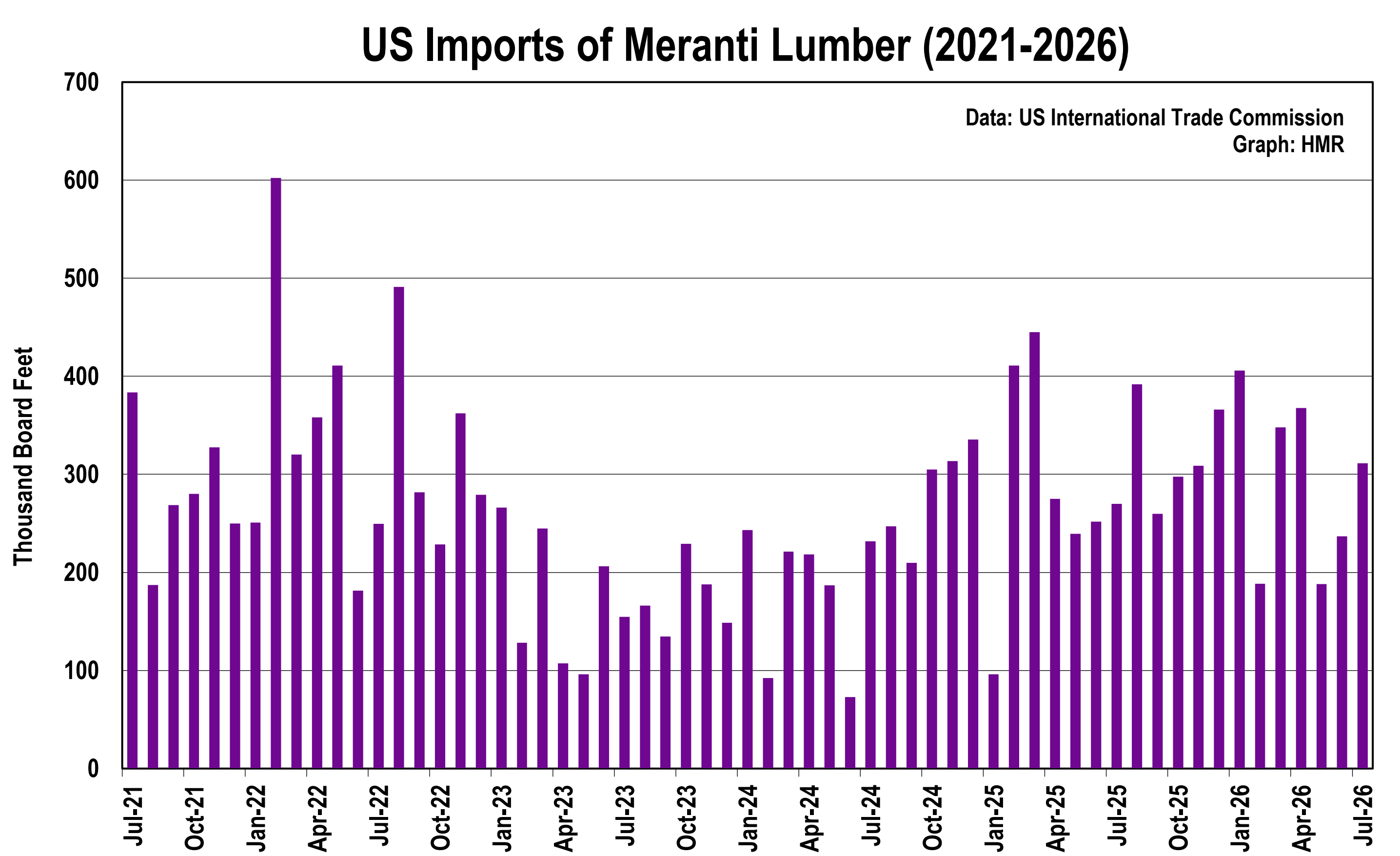
Reported prices bear out elevated demand, with the listings and upper ends of the ranges for all thicknesses rising this month.

"Big declines in incoming Sapele, Spanish Cedar, and Teak, and a surge in Jatoba, are the most notable trends coming from the July data."

Sipo/Utile
Demand for Sipo/Utile remains low. The species has not been a great performer in 2026, though regular customers maintain sales for some importers. Quartersawn stock is still preferred to flatsawn. Stateside inventories are understood to be healthy across the board, with few contacts looking for additional stock right now.

continue

Figure 3



Market Commentary cont'd

Observed prices show that demand is stable, leading to no changes to any listings or ranges in this issue.

Other Tropical Species
Imports of minor tropical species like Iroko and Virola were way off in July, and arrivals of Andiroba/Padauk and Aniegre fell to nothing. Those with Padauk in inventory are struggling to find homes for it. One importer noted that figured Lacewood has enjoyed some movement this summer, while there has also been interest in 4/4 and 8/4 Wenge.

Temperate Species
From a supply point of view, Beech is the leader in imported temperate hardwoods from non-Canadian sources, with arrivals surging in July. Despite this, demand from the cabinet sector, which is one of the main markets for imported Beech, has been sluggish. European White Oak has been a popular item for high-end residential projects around the US this year. Importers say the species is still garnering plenty of interest from those who are happy to pay for it.

Trade Data
Recently released USITC data show that 7.7 MMBF of tropical hardwoods were imported into the United States in July, a figure that was up 12% from the same month last year. Overall year-to-date figures for 2026 show volume is down 2% compared to 2025.

Big declines in incoming Sapele, Spanish Cedar, and Teak, and a surge in Jatoba, are the most notable trends coming from the July data. Only 523,693 BF of Sapele arrived in the US in July, down 57% from 1.2 MMBF in July 2025. Overall, 5.2 MMBF has entered US ports this year, down 28% compared to this time last year. Spanish Cedar imports slumped to just 147,448 BF in July, a 40% drop from the same month last year. Teak imports totaled around 78,000 BF, a 41% decrease from July 2025.

Imports of African Mahogany, Meranti, and Jatoba were all up in July. USITC data show imports of Genuine Mahogany also surged, but given that a high percentage of those shipments originated from Finland and are very low in value, *HMR*/Fastmarkets believe this figure is erroneous.

Overall, the US imported 15.1 MMBF of hardwood lumber from non-Canadian sources in July, a 10% drop from the same month last year. Brazil (4.2 MMBF) and Germany (2.7 MMBF) comfortably stayed the two largest non-Canadian suppliers to the US in July, with both recording bumper months. Imports from France, Uruguay, Cameroon, and China all fell in July compared to the same month in 2025.

Temperate hardwood imports to the US were at 7.4 MMBF in July, down 25% from July 2025. Beech (2.6 MMBF) enjoyed a strong month, up 22% on the same month last year, while all other temperate species were down. Though imports of White Oak—primarily from France and Germany—are up 60% this year compared to 2025, only 722,409 BF entered the US in July, marking a 76% decrease from the same month last year.

(See tables on US imports of hardwood lumber by species and country on page 2).

Hardwood Plywood Imports
According to USITC data, US imports of hardwood plywood edged down in July, a month headlined by a noteworthy drop from Canada and the continued deterioration of Vietnam.

Shipments totaled $104.1 million for the month, a 4% decline from June. It was the second-highest monthly total so far in 2026, but it represents a 25% decrease from July 2025. Anti-dumping and countervailing duties from the Department of Commerce have had a major impact on where hardwood plywood imports have come from over the last year.

The downturn in imports from Canada was the most eye-catching number in the data. A

Market Commentary cont'd

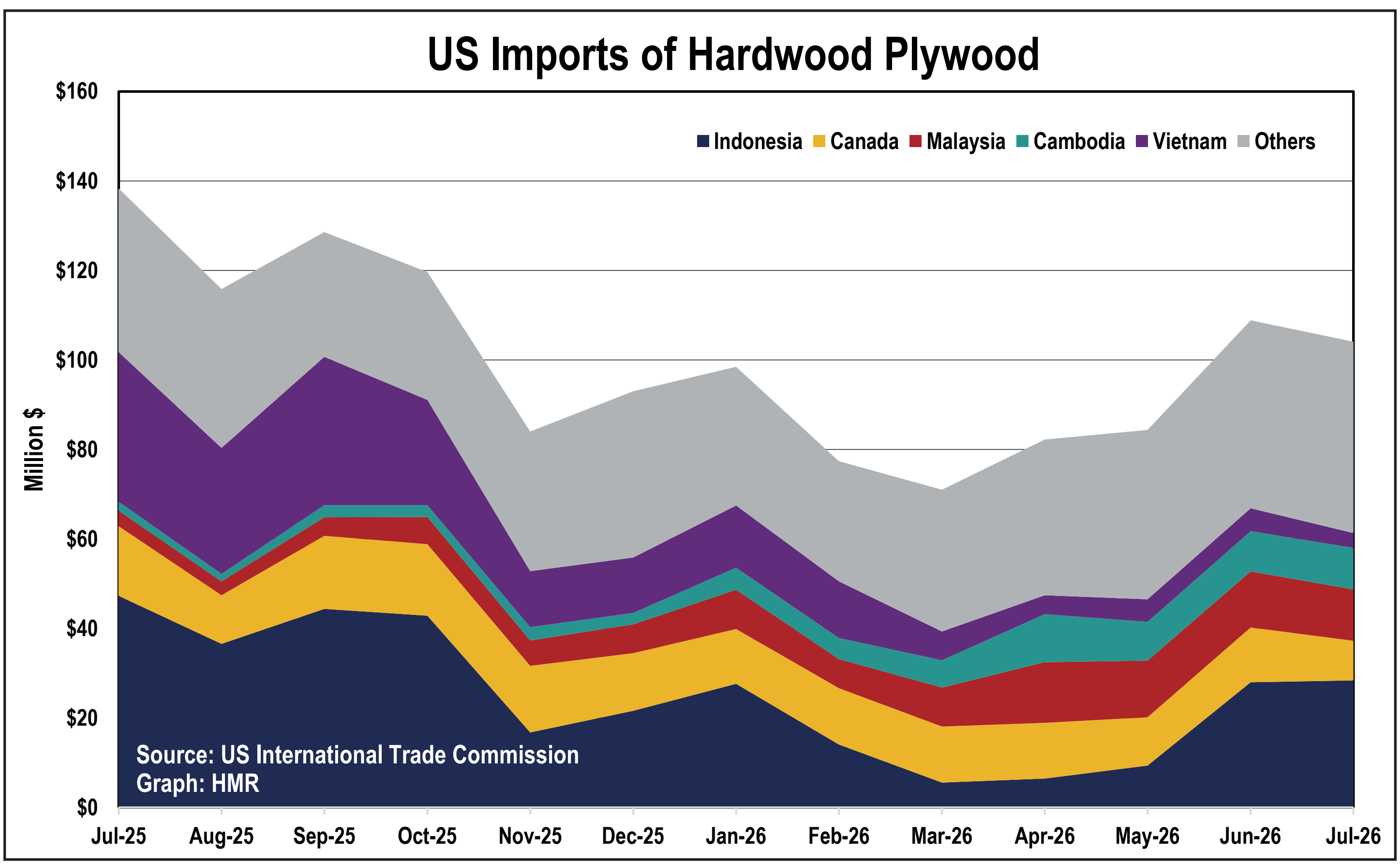
total of $8.9 million of hardwood plywood was imported into the US from north of the border in July, down 27% from June. July numbers were not impacted by the 50% Section 338 tariff applied to certain Canadian hardwood imports by the Trump Administration starting on August 22, meaning next month's results could also follow the downward trend.

Only $3.3 million of hardwood plywood arrived from Vietnam in July, marking a 90% contraction from July 2025. The massive falloff is a result of sweeping anti-dumping duties against the Southeast Asian nation starting late last year. Numbers out of Vietnam improved in May and June, but the July figure is the country's lowest since September 2017.

With $28.4 million incoming in July, Indonesia retained its mantel as the largest foreign supplier of hardwood plywood to the US. Receipts from Indonesia dropped to as little as $5.6 million in March, soon after duties were imposed, but have since rebounded. The July number is still a long way off the $47.3 million figure recorded for Indonesia in July 2025.

Of the second-tier suppliers, imports from Russia ($8.8 million), Spain ($6.0 million), and Ecuador ($5.9 million) all fell. Imports from Gabon ($3.2 million), Brazil ($2.0 million), and Latvia ($1.1 million) all rose.

Figure 4



A part of Fastmarkets

5101 Wheelis Dr., Ste 312, Memphis, TN 38117-4550
Phone: 901-767-9126
Email: client.services@fastmarkets.com

Website: www.hmr.com