

NATURAL RESISTANCE OF RUBBER WOOD TO MARINE BORERS AND A PRELIMINARY NOTE ON THE EFFECT OF PRESERVATIVE TREATMENT

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Results of exposure tests carried out on rubber wood at 3 Indian ports (Visakhapatnam and Krishnapatnam on the east coast and Goa on the west coast) are reported. While untreated panels were tested at all the harbours, panels treated with CCA and CCB preservatives were tested at Visakhapatnam and Krishnapatnam. The results indicate that rubber wood is highly perishable in untreated condition, having been completely destroyed by marine borers in only 4-6 months. Treated panels fared well having undergone only negligible attack even after 24 months of exposure and are continuing in the field. This study indicates that rubber wood could be suitably upgraded with preservative treatment to find application even in the rigorous marine environment. Further tests are, however, necessary.

Key words : *Hevea brasiliensis*, Natural durability, Preservative treatment, CCA, CCB, Marine borers.

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INTRODUCTION

Wood from the rubber tree, *Hevea brasiliensis* (Willd. ex Ait. de Juss.) Muell Arg., has long remained under-utilised in India, with huge quantity being burnt as fuel. Its potential as an important raw wood for a variety of end uses has just been realised in the country and in recent years, there has been a renewed interest in establishing a scientific and technological base for its better utilisation. The abundant availability (approximately 1.2 million cu m/ annum) of rubber wood (Sekhar, 1989) at a time, when India finds itself critically short of industrial timber, provides tremendous opportunity to de-

velop necessary strategies that render this timber from non-conventional source suitable to value-added end products. However, effective utilisation of rubber wood can be achieved only when decay and destructive organisms are checked. A knowledge concerning the nature and extent of damage caused by bio-deteriorating organisms at different ecological regimes, where the end product is to be used, is essential for evolving any meaningful solution. It is also necessary to establish adequate data base on the natural bio-resistance and its enhancement by chemical treatments. A perusal of literature reveals that studies on bio-resistance of rubber wood against different land pests in treated

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