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*Guaiacum sanctum*

**LIGNUM SANCTUM** is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to the Bahamas, the West Indies and southern Florida (particularly the Florida Keys) in the United States, it has small, blue flowers.

It is also known as Guayacán, Holywood lignum vitae, Lignum vitae, and Roughbark lignum vitae.

The heartwood is collected commercially and some logs are used to extract the resin.

From at least January 2002 lignum sanctum has been included under Appendix II of CITES.

This means that authorities believe this species will be seriously threatened if it is over-harvested and therefore trade in it should be monitored and controlled. Governments are required to issue export licences to certify that this species was legally acquired and that its exportation does not threaten the survival of that species in the wild there.

*Sanctum* is Latin (to consecrate, hallow, make sacred) meaning ‘holy’.

The wood of lignum sanctum is one of the hardest. It has been used to make bearings for ships’ propeller shafts and for machinery used in food processing, as well as pulleys, mallets and bowls (for the sport). Its commercial uses at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries have been similar to those of guaiacum (*Guaiacum officinale*). In addition the leaves have been used as a soap substitute. The resin provides lubricant and the wood is used for making machinery bearings.