

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Eighteenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Buenos Aires (Argentina), 17 to 21 March 2009

Proposals for possible consideration at CoP15

Proposals to amend the Appendices

PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE *BULNESIA SARMIENTOI* IN APPENDIX II

1. This document has been submitted by the Management Authority of Argentina*.

Introduction

2. *Bulnesia sarmientoi* Lorenz ex Grises is endemic to the Gran Chaco region. This biogeographical region, which covers 1,000,000 km², is located in the centre of the South-American continent. This ecosystem is shared among Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. It is one of the regions with the richest biodiversity in the world and contains the largest forested area of the continent after the Amazon.
3. The region extends over:
 - **Argentina:** north and north-east (Chaco, Salta and Formosa provinces)
 - **Bolivia:** south-east (Santa Cruz department, up to the Sierra de Chiquitos)
 - **Paraguay:** west (Alto Paraguay, Boquerón and Presidente Hayes). The species is widely distributed in this last country.
4. *Bulnesia sarmientoi* grows in the xerophyte forests of the Gran Chaco. It thrives on soils that are loamy, well-structured, hard when dry and sticky when wet, brackish to salty, and with a brackish to salty water-table located less than 6 m deep. It grows in isolation or in groves, known locally as "palosantales".

* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

Map: American Gran Chaco



Source: www.elgranchaco.com

Characteristics of the *Bulnesia sarmientoi* wood

Sapwood: creamy yellow colour

Heartwood: green, brownish green and bluish green. Attractive veining.

Lustre: moderate; fine and homogenous texture and very pleasant fragrance.

5. It is one of the hardest and heaviest woods in the world (1100-1280 kg/m³) owing to the varying quantity of calcium oxalate found between the fibres. It is very resistant and imputrescible, even when buried, owing to the presence of resin, its essential oil.

Morphological characteristics

6. Deciduous tree of up to 25-30 m in height and 80-90 cm in DBH (Diameter at Breast Height); branches ascending and crown narrow; bole straight and fluted; outer bark hard, brown, warty, which detaches in plates very easily when rubbed; inner bark yellow, resinous and with orangey granules. Foliage very green, concentrated at the tip of twigs. Grows very slowly because of its density.

Use

7. Historically, used domestically for handicraft by different indigenous groups (mainly the Wichies).
8. Export of this species began when its timber started being used to make dowels for boats, then in housing as well as to make durable poles, beams, lintels and pillars. It is also used in wood-turning and to make stakes for fencing and cattle-pens. Finally, it is used to make furniture and for indoor parquet or surface lining.
9. Other uses are:
 - Essential oil: known as 'guaiac' or 'oil of guaiac', used after processing as a basis for strong perfumes.

- Firewood: because it gives off a strongly-perfumed smoke and lights up very easily.
- Coal: direct use of the wood.
- Bark: decoction used in traditional medicine to cure gastric pains.

International trade status and inclusion in CITES

10. During 2006, our country noted a great increase in the volume of exports of specimens of this species. This led Argentina to request to the CITES Secretariat that it be included in Appendix III, a listing that came into force on 12 February 2008.
11. The inclusion of *Bulnesia sarmientoi* in CITES Appendix III contributed, at the national level, to improve traceability, thereby preventing great volumes of specimens of illegal origin from being exported. Additionally, at the international level, communications improved with China, the largest importer of this species, thus allowing seizures of timber that had been exported with falsified Argentine CITES documents.
12. Because of all the reasons stated above, we consider it necessary for the species to be included in CITES Appendix II. Indeed, it meets the relevant biological and trade criteria. The proposal will be put forward by our country at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Doha, Qatar, in January 2010.