



*Peltogyne paniculata*

***Peltogyne***, known as **Purpleheart**, is a genus of 23 species of flowering plants in the family Fabaceae, native to tropical regions of Central and South America, where they occur in tropical rainforests.

They are medium-sized to large trees growing to 30-50 m tall, with trunk diameters of up to 1.5 m. The leaves are alternate, divided into a symmetrical pair of large leaflets 5-10 cm long and 2-4 cm broad. The flowers are small, with five white petals, produced in panicles. The fruit is a pod containing a single seed.

The trees are prized for their beautiful heartwood which, when cut, quickly turns from a dark brown to a rich purple color. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light darkens the wood to a brown color with a slight hue of the original purple. This effect can be minimized with a finish containing a UV inhibitor. The dry wood is very hard and dense with a specific gravity of 0.86 (54 lb/ft<sup>3</sup> or 860 kg/m<sup>3</sup>). This wood is quite dense, and if it is to be worked, then a sharp carbide blade is required to cut it. For uses of this wood it is prized for fine inlay work, woodturning, cabinetry, flooring, and furniture. Exposure to the dust generated by cutting and sanding purpleheart can cause irritation and nausea, possibly due to the presence of dalbergione (neoflavonoid) compounds in the wood. This also makes purpleheart wood unsuitable to most people for use in jewelry. The wood is also known as amaranth and violet wood. Overharvesting has caused several species to become endangered in areas where they were once abundant.