

Sticks

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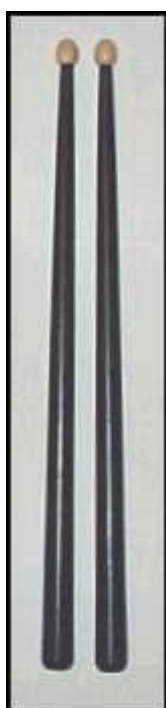
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It should be noted that this text refers specifically to pipe band style sticks.

Recently we have been experimenting with sticks made from different hardwoods. If you don't want to read further, click the links below to see examples of sticks made from ramin. Pairs are matched to within 1 gram and the weight (in grams) is marked on the butt. All sticks whether stained or not, are clear finished.



Natural



Black



Green



Red



Weight

The species we tried and their characteristics are as follows

- **Maple** - hard, average density, tried and tested, makes good all round stick. Most manufacturers use maple.
- **Ramin** - hard, density less than maple. Some selection required but makes great sticks! More on ramin later.
- **Cherry** - hard, density less than maple, only heartwood suitable for sticks, expensive.
- **Hickory** - hard, very tough, density higher than maple. Sticks have to be thinned otherwise they become too heavy.
- **Ash** - hard, resilient, average density. Too much selection needed because of variable quality.

- **Purpleheart** - rock hard, high density, blunts tools quickly. Makes a beautiful but too heavy stick, expensive.
- **Other** tropical hardwoods - we tried several but although they looked great they were too heavy and expensive.

Most players seem to agree that maple is hard to beat, it's certainly true that it makes a fine stick. It seems also generally agreed that a heavier/denser stick produces a lower pitched sound and this is where ramin scores. Because it's density is less than maple, a higher pitched sound is produced. This of course, is dependant on the weight, but when ramin and maple sticks of the same weight are compared, the pitch difference is noticeable.

A ramin stick made to average dimensions will typically weigh 5 - 6 grams less than a maple stick of the same dimensions. This is all to the good because up to a point, lighter is better. Test weighing sticks from various manufacturers reveals a range of less than 50 grams to more than 70 grams per stick. In my opinion, 70 grams is too heavy for a pipe band stick, there is no question that it tends to kill a "lively" snare sound. Personally, I prefer a 52 - 55 gram stick, many people I have discussed the subject with, also like this weight.

With this in mind, we have started making ramin sticks in the 50 - 60 gram range. Each stick is hand turned from material selected to match the required weight based upon our average dimensions. It is sometimes necessary to alter dimensions slightly to get the correct balance. Since the density largely determines tonal quality, each pair is turned from blanks of the same density. We haven't set this up as a commercial enterprise yet but if you are interested in trying ramin sticks, [e-mail](#) me and we can get something going

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