The Crystal Caves
One man's passion...

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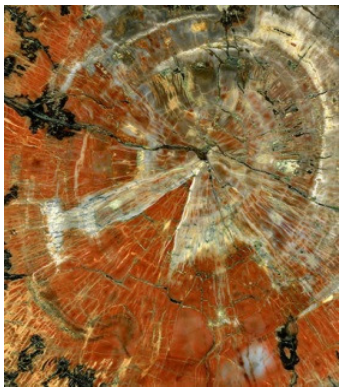
Petrified Wood



Wood turns to stone when a tree becomes buried under sediment and the lack of oxygen initially prevents it from decomposing. Water flowing through the remains deposit minerals, mostly silicate, in the plants cells and as the plant slowly decays; the stone mould takes its place. The silicate turns to quartz. Other minerals, such as iron, manganese, and carbon add the colours.

In Arizona an area of 220,000 acres is listed as one of the world's largest petrified forest national park.

About 220 million years ago, this was a large river system with galleries of trees along the waterways. As the trees died naturally over many years, some floated downstream to form log jams. The various forests in the park are those log jams. The petrified forests in Arizona have few samples of bark, leaves or branches because these would have fallen or broken off as the logs were transported down the river system.

Petrified wood is not rare and found worldwide, including Australia.