

Kashmir Willow or English Willow? Buying Cricket Bats From India



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Kashmir willow is good enough for junior, training and casual ranges, and players say it plays heavier with less "ping" than English willow. Both come from the same tree, cricket bat willow, so the difference is growing conditions and how consistently the wood is selected. Grades are trade conventions, not a standard, so define grade in the order by grain count, colour and blemishes, and make weight on arrival a contract term.

The Short Version

- English and Kashmir willow are both *Salix alba*, and the true cricket bat willow is the variety *caerulea*, according to Kashmiri forestry researchers.
- Kashmir researchers say makers there sometimes use unsuitable willow because the right variety is hard to tell apart.
- Players say Kashmir willow costs about half as much at the same grade and suits juniors and casual play (Indicative, 2026).
- There is no official grade. Write grain count, colour and allowed knots into the order, with photos of each blade.
- One buyer's bat arrived about 9% heavier than quoted. Agree weight measured at your warehouse, with a tolerance.

Kashmir willow is good enough for junior, training and casual cricket ranges, and for those it's the sensible choice. Players say it plays heavier, with less "ping" off the bat than English willow, so it's the wrong wood for a premium adult range. The bigger risk is not the wood you choose but the wood you receive, because Indian bat grades are trade conventions and both the grade and the willow type get overstated.

"The primary hurdle lies in the quality of the bats as the identity of true bat willow has always been ambiguous in Kashmir." That's not a forum complaint. It's the head of the forestry faculty at Kashmir's agricultural university, speaking to Mongabay in 2024 ([Mongabay India, June 2024](#)). He said makers sometimes end up using unsuitable willow "or even poplars". Hold that thought, because it explains most of what buyers report. Where the bats are made, and the depot and fair, are on our [Meerut cluster page](#). This article is about the wood and the grade. The caveat - we haven't graded a batch of bats ourselves, so the grading method below is built from what players check, not from a lab standard.

SourcingFrom Intelligence

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01 Kashmir and English willow are the same tree. Both are *Salix alba*, and the variety *caerulea* is the true cricket bat willow. Kashmiri researchers found *caerulea* grown in Kashmir "at par" with the UK's. The gap is selection and standardisation. ([Mongabay India, citing SKUAST-Kashmir, June 2024](#))

02 Buyers report grades overstated and Kashmir willow sold as English. One counted "23 grains, varying shades - and it clearly has knots in it. Nowhere near grade 1." ([r/Cricket, 2025 to 2026, four voices in our forum log](#))

03 Bats can land heavier than quoted. An Australian buyer was quoted 1,127 g and weighed 1,232 g on arrival, about 9% more. ([r/Cricket, January 2025, one buyer](#))

What we don't know yet

□ Whether any Indian maker publishes a written grading standard. We found none.

1. What Is the Real Difference Between Kashmir and

English Willow?

Less than the price gap suggests. Mongabay's report, quoting researchers at SKUAST-Kashmir, puts it plainly: "Both Kashmiri willow bats and English willow bats are made from the same willow tree, *Salix alba*." The variety that makes good bats is *caerulea*, and the tree's properties shift with rainfall, soil and moisture. The same researchers found Kashmir-grown *caerulea* comparable to England's, but said "the industry in the U.K. is more organised, with standardised material and hence, a higher guarantee of quality."

So the difference a buyer feels is consistency. An English willow cleft has usually been selected from known trees grown for bats. A Kashmir cleft may be *caerulea* or may be another willow, and the maker may not know. That's why the same research project, started in 2021, set out to teach growers and makers to identify true bat willow at all.

Kashmir bat-making has deep roots, by the way, and a link to the next country over. Mongabay traces it to a Sialkot industrialist who set up a bat unit near Bijbehara in the 19th century. Today the units sit mostly in Anantnag and Pulwama districts, while Meerut is the town Uttar Pradesh names for sports goods.

2. Is Kashmir Willow Good Enough for Your Range?

For some of it, clearly yes. UK club players in our forum log say Kashmir willow costs about half as much as English willow at the same grade, and one told a parent, "If you're buying for a child / junior, don't obsess over English willow. Kashmiri is just fine" ([r/Cricket, December 2025](#)). The same players describe "a big jump in 'ping'" between the two ([r/Cricket, March 2026](#)). The half-price ratio is one forum's view in 2026, so treat it as Indicative.

So a simple split works –

- **Kashmir willow** for junior sizes, training bats, tape-ball and casual ranges, and entry-level adult bats sold as such.
- **English willow** for anything sold on performance to adult club players.
- **Never mixed in one SKU.** If a line is sold as English willow, every blade in it is English willow.

Not everyone agrees on the ceiling. One 2026 voice noted that "several players in ICC now using Kashmir willow" (our forum log). That's a selection story again. The best Kashmir clefts can be very good. You just can't assume a whole container of them is.

3. How Do You Know the Grade Is Real?

You define it yourself, because nobody else has. "Grade 1" or "Grade A" is the seller's word, and buyers say the claim is stretched routinely ("every bat is grade 1"). The things players check are visible on the blade –

- **Grain count.** The number of straight grains across the face. More, straighter grains read as a higher grade.
- **Colour.** Even, pale colour across the face. "Varying shades" is a lower grade.
- **Knots and blemishes.** Where they are and how many, especially on the hitting area.

A counter-voice in the same thread warned that grain counts "can't really tell about the playing properties", and that's fair. Grain is a proxy, not a performance test. But it's a proxy a supplier can't argue with once it's written down.

So write the grade as numbers. A minimum straight-grain count on the face, the colour band (with a reference photo you've both signed), and the blemishes allowed, by position. Then ask for a photo of the face and edge of every blade before the handle goes on, numbered to the order. It's a small cost for the supplier and it turns "grade 1" into something you can check.

4. How Do You Stop Kashmir Willow Being Sold as English?

Colour is the first clue buyers use. One UK buyer said of a bat sold as English willow, "it just isn't the right colour at all" (r/Cricket, November 2025). But colour alone can be gamed, and a bat-brand founder in our log alleged that some Kashmir willow is bleached. He sells bats, so take that as a claim, not a finding.

The stronger controls are on paper and on the scale. Ask the supplier where it buys its clefts and in what form, and get the willow type written into every invoice line. Weigh a sample of finished bats against the weight band you'd expect for the size and willow you ordered, because a run of bats well over that band is a reason to ask questions. And if you're paying an English-willow price, inspect the batch before the balance, not after the season. Our method for that is on [quality control in India](#).

Switching country isn't the cure. When one buyer's Indian bat failed its grade, a reply suggested ordering from Sialkot instead. Our [India or Sialkot](#) article covers where Pakistan is the stronger choice, and cricket isn't clearly one of them.

5. Why Do Bats Arrive Heavier Than Quoted?

Usually because the quote and the arrival weigh different things. The Australian buyer's seller said the 1,127 g figure was "without sticker/oiling

etc." The bat that arrived weighed 1,232 g ([r/Cricket, January 2025](#)). That's one buyer, so it's not a rate. It's still about 105 g, roughly 9%, and for a batter that's a different bat.

The fix is to agree what's weighed and where. Specify the weight band for the finished bat, with grip, stickers and any oil or coating on, measured at your warehouse, with a stated tolerance and what happens to bats outside it. Weight on the factory floor before finishing tells you nothing you can sell.

6. What Should the Order Say?

Six lines do most of the work –

1. Willow type per SKU, English or Kashmir, on the invoice line.
2. Grade defined by minimum grain count, colour reference and allowed blemishes by position.
3. Numbered photos of face and edge for each blade before handling.
4. Finished weight band, measured at destination, with a tolerance.
5. A pre-shipment check of a sample of bats by someone who plays, in the hand, against the written grade.
6. Any grips, coatings or junior items tested to your market's chemical rules, which [toys and sporting goods](#) covers.

If you want someone to visit the workshop, check the clefts, grade and weigh bats before they ship, [SourcingSync](#) does that.

Questions Buyers Ask

Is Kashmir willow a different species from English willow?



No. Both are *Salix alba*, and good bat willow is the variety *caerulea* in either place, according to Kashmiri forestry researchers. The difference is growing conditions and selection.

Is grade 1 an official standard?



Can I sell Kashmir willow bats to adult clubs?



Should I buy bats from Meerut or Jalandhar?

