

**TEAK**

An extremely durable and water-resistant wood, teak has been exploited for centuries. Occurring naturally in India, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Burma, the British began heavily exploiting teak for ship-building in the early 1800s. Britain annexed India in 1850 in part for access to its teak, and then Burma in 1851, to exploit its vast teak forests. By the 1950s, most of India's teak was gone. Thailand was mostly logged out by the 1970s. Deforestation led to massive floods in Thailand in the late 1980s, resulting in a logging ban in 1989. Thai timber companies turned to Burma to supply teak logs to Thailand's extensive mills. Most teak from Thailand, Singapore and China originates in Burma.

Burma's ruling military junta uses rape, torture, forced relocation and forced labor to rule the country, selling teak to buy weapons and build their personal fortunes. Teak is one of the few stable sources of export income for the corrupt regime.

Buying teak fuels forest destruction and violence by corrupt regimes.

**EKKI**

A dense, dark wood, ekki (also called azobe and bangass) is logged from the rainforests of West Africa, especially Cameroon, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

Logging crews in Africa, punching roads deep into the jungles, local hire hunters to feed them. These hunters utilize the transportation provided by the logging trucks to hunt out the endangered species of African rainforests, selling their catch in towns and cities. It's called the 'bushmeat' trade and it's illegal.

Great apes such as gorillas and chimpanzees, as well as endangered monkeys, pangolins and duikers (a type of deer) are being eliminated from the forests of West Africa, driven by the demand for African hardwoods.

Jan. Goodall, world renowned chimpanzee researcher, sees the bushmeat trade as the greatest threat to Africa's great apes.

When we buy ekki or other African woods we help drive endangered African wildlife to extinction.

**IPE**

A dense wood, cinnamon-colored when fresh, the majority of ipè on the market is taken illegally from the rainforests of the Brazilian Amazon. Outlaw timber companies invade indigenous reserves and park and nature preserves, destroying not only the fragile forests but the homelands of indigenous tribal peoples. Illegal loggers punch new roads into pristine areas, fell valuable trees and transport the wood to mills and exporters. The roads doom the forest. The United States is by far the leading importer of ipè.

Massive, emergent flowering trees with medicinal properties, there are seven species of ipè, all exploited. Some companies market ipè and other dense woods under trade names such as "Pao Lope" and "Ironwoods". Don't be fooled by company rhetoric about sustainability — all these woods are old growth and from endangered forests.

Buying ipè and other Amazon woods drives forests, species and human cultures into extinction.

**LAUAN**

Also called meranti or Philippine mahogany, lauan is the most commonly imported tropical hardwood, entering the United States as plywood sheets, veneers, door skins and in furniture, making up 80% of US tropical wood imports. Lauan is highly undervalued, as Asian logging firms have cleared through millions of hectares of rainforest since the 1940s. Philippines, once the largest exporter, is now over 80% deforested; Malaysia and Indonesia, both recent top exporters, have each lost half of their forests, mostly to meet the demand for plywood exports.

Indigenous peoples in each of these countries have attempted to stand in the way of the slaughter of their forests, but to little avail. In Malaysia, the army has beaten and arrested many indigenous Penan as they attempt to block the ravaging of their land by Japanese and Malaysian logging firms and the government. In the Philippines, activists have been targeted for assassination by illegal loggers seeking to cut the few remaining lauan trees on private lands.

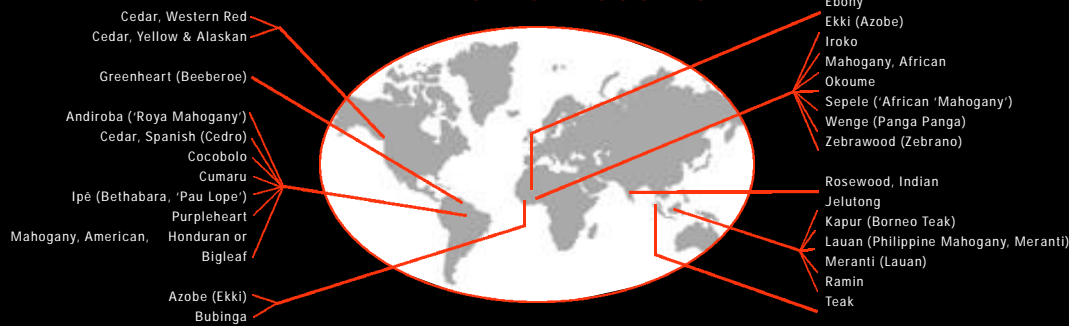
**MAHOGANY**

A beautiful dark reddish wood with fine grain, the majority of mahogany on the market today is taken illegally from rainforests in Brazil, Peru and Africa. Outlaw timber companies invade indigenous reserves and park and nature preserves, destroying not only the fragile forests, but the homelands of indigenous tribal people. Tree poachers punch new roads into pristine areas, cut valuable trees, transport the wood to middlemen and exporters, who in turn use counterfeit paperwork to sell the wood to importers in the United States, Europe and Japan. The United States is the world's largest importer of mahogany.

Smaller volumes are imported from Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Belize. True mahogany is commercially extinct from its native areas in the Caribbean.

In Africa, loggers seeking mahogany are facilitating the illegal trade in bushmeat. When we buy mahogany doors, paneling or furniture, we are driving demand for logging forests, endangered species and distinct human cultures into extinction.

**THE FOLLOWING WOODS ORIGINATE FROM DESTRUCTIVE RAINFOREST LOGGING**



**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

WHEN IT COMES TO WOOD PRODUCTS, AVOID BUYING OR SPECIFYING RAINFOREST WOODS. AS A LAST RESORT, ANY RAINFOREST WOODS YOU DO BUY OR SPECIFY SHOULD BE INDEPENDENTLY CERTIFIED, ACCREDITED BY THE FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (FSC).

INFORM MUNICIPAL SUPPLIERS AND CONTRACTORS THAT YOUR MUNICIPALITY WILL NOT PURCHASE RAINFOREST WOODS AND WHY.

LOCATE SOURCES FOR SOUND ALTERNATIVES IN YOUR AREA, WHETHER THEY BE RECLAIMED OR RECYCLED MATERIALS, BIO-BASED ALTERNATIVES, OR DOMESTIC WOODS FROM SOURCES CERTIFIED AS WELL MANAGED.

**BOARDWALKS, PIERS, FLOATING DOCKS, WALKWAYS, RAILINGS**

AVOID IPE, GREENHEART, EKKI, CUMARU OR OTHER TROPICAL HARD-WOODS, OR WESTERN RED CEDAR, REDWOOD, ALASKAN CEDAR OR OTHER TEMPERATE RAINFOREST SOFTWOODS.

**BENCHES AND PICNIC TABLES**

AVOID TEAK, IPE, CUMARU, GREENHEART, EKKI, PURPLEHEART OR EVEN MAHOGANY.

**PILINGS, BUMPERS AND UNDERSTRUCTURES**

AVOID GREENHEART FROM THE RAINFORESTS OF GUYANA OR EKKI FROM AFRICAN RAINFORESTS.

**RAILROAD CROSSINGS**

AVOID EKKI, OR OTHER TROPICAL HARDWOODS.

*Alternatives*

AVOIDING RAINFOREST WOOD IS EASY, AS THERE ARE NUMEROUS ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND SOCIALLY BENEFICIAL ALTERNATIVES FOR YOUR WATERFRONT PROJECTS.

**Recycled Plastic Lumber (RPL)**

Made from milk jugs and soda & detergent bottles heading to landfills, this high-tech material is the choice for a new century. With a life expectancy exceeding 100 years (longer even than concrete or steel) and guaranteed for 50 years, RPL makes the most sense in durability alone for water-contact of waterfront applications. RPL won't splinter, warp or rot and it's made in the US, so it also reduces energy use.

Structural RPLs are available in an array of tones for load-bearing uses. Less expensive brands are great for docks, benches, picnic tables and play equipment.

**Domestic Woods**

There are numerous domestic hardwoods that are excellent for outdoor and waterfront applications. Black locust, a common species occurring in the eastern US, is very rot resistant and durable. White oak is also very durable for outdoor benches and decking.

Certain domestic softwoods are also very rot-resistant, such as western red cedar, Alaskan cedar, yellow cedar, eastern white cedar and eastern red cedar. However, many of these species, especially those in the west, are still being logged from endangered old growth forests. In order to ensure that you are using only second growth from well-managed forests, specify only FSC-accredited certified (see language).

**Metal**

While it takes a great deal of energy to produce, steel is also heavily recycled. It can be used for benches and other outdoor furniture and playground equipment.

**SPECIFYING AND BID LANGUAGE**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY COUNCIL that the City of \_\_\_\_\_

will not purchase products containing in whole or in part wood from tropical forests, or tropical or temperate rainforests excepting those woods which are proven to have been harvested in an environmentally sound manner in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Appendix A.

**THROUGH RAINFOREST RELIEF'S PROGRAMS**

- PHILADELPHIA, PA BRIDGES DEPARTMENT—Switched to Forest Stewardship Council certified wood for bridge project (1998).
- SAN DIEGO, CA—The Design Committee of the City Council voted not to use rainforest wood in future projects (1997).
- LONG BEACH, CA/OCEAN CITY, NY/BUFFALO, NY—City Council resolutions to not use rainforest wood for boardwalks (1998/1996/2003).
- GREENPORT, NY—Agreed not to use uncertified wood for phases II & III of Mitchell Park boardwalk, and all future boardwalks and renovations (2000).
- LONG BEACH, NY—Cancelled bids for rainforest wood (1999). Passed ordinance banning uncertified rainforest wood (2001).
- DISNEY CORPORATION—Voluntarily agreed to order boardwalk wood only from EcoTimber International certified wood supplier (1998).

*Others*  
HAVE DONE IT

*Contact*  
RAINFOREST RELIEF  
212.243-2394  
relief@igc.org

RAINFOREST RELIEF, THE NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED LEADER ON ALTERNATIVES TO TROPICAL HARDWOODS, IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST YOUR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM.

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F P.O. BOX 150566 BROOKLYN NEW YORK 11215

## MUNICIPAL VERSION

# RAINFOREST WOOD GUIDE

WHAT TO USE TO HELP  
SPARE THE EARTH'S RAINFORESTS FROM DESTRUCTION

RAINFOREST RELIEF  
[www.rainforestrelief.org](http://www.rainforestrelief.org) [relief@igc.org](mailto:relief@igc.org)  
P.O. BOX 150566 BROOKLYN NEW YORK 11215

## THE PROBLEM

Although the value and benefits of tropical rainforests are well documented, they continue to be eliminated at an unprecedented rate. Conversion to cash crops such as beef, bananas, coffee and cocoa and logging, mining and oil drilling continue to destroy these vital and fragile forests. Among those most responsible is the rainforest timber trade. Logging is the greatest factor in the loss of rainforests as new roads provide access and lead to further clearing. Due to this loss, each day, hundreds of species of rare plants, animals, insects and small organisms become extinct, being driven forever from Earth by human ignorance and greed.

Rainforest destruction contributes 25% to 30% of global warming gases to the atmosphere, thus adding substantially to the warming of Earth.

Numerous cures for human ailments have been discovered in rainforest and more are being researched right now. However, we have already lost one potential cure for AIDS to rapacious logging for plywood.

The demand for tropical hardwoods is spurring illegal and unsustainable logging that degrades and destroys these fragile ecosystems and threatens the livelihood of indigenous peoples. Many indigenous forest dwelling people have been murdered by loggers seeking the timber on their lands.

Tropical rainforest hardwoods are imported into the US as plywood, veneers or paneling, as lumber or as finished items such as furniture, doors, decking, molding, picture frames and flooring.

The United States is the largest importer of tropical hardwoods by value, creating the demand that drives the logging. Is it worth the loss of these essential forests to save \$4 on a sheet of plywood?

What type of wood was used to make the benches in your park?

## WOODS TO AVOID

Andiroba — furniture  
Apitong — truck flooring and decking  
Azobe (Ekki) — decking and crossties  
Bubinga — paneling  
Cedar, Western Red — decks and fencing  
Cedar, Yellow & Alaskan — decking, stringers, fencing  
Cedar, Spanish (Cedro) — mouldings  
Cocobolo — furniture  
Cumaru — decking and benches  
Ebony  
Ekki (Azobe) — decking and crossties  
Greenheart (Beeberoe) — pilings and decking  
Ipé (Bethabara, 'Pau Lope')  
— decking, benches, and railings  
Iroko  
Jelutong — pencils  
Kapur (Borneo Teak) — furniture

Lauan (Philippine Mahogany, Meranti)  
— plywood and doorskins  
Mahogany, African — furniture and paneling  
Mahogany,  
American, Honduran or Bigleaf ('True')  
— furniture and paneling  
Meranti (Lauan) — plywood  
Okoume — marine plywood  
Purpleheart — furniture, benches, and crafts  
Ramin — furniture, plywood, dowels, and tools  
Rosewood, Honduran & Indian — furniture  
Sepele ('African Mahogany')  
— paneling and furniture  
Teak — outdoor benches, railings, and boat trim  
Wenge (Panga Panga) — paneling  
Zebrawood (Zebrano) — flooring



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