



How Outdoor Furniture Can Destroy Rainforests and Kill Orangutans

Nyatoh is a term given to a number of species of wood that are typically being converted into outdoor furniture now being sold in the US. The species occur throughout Southeast Asia but the vast majority of exports are coming from Indonesia, where over-logging has had a catastrophic effect on rainforests. The demand for nyatoh, balau, kapur and other woods used in outdoor furniture is causing tropical forest destruction and illegal intrusions on indigenous peoples' lands in Southeast Asia, mostly in Indonesia. Indigenous cultures and native wildlife are being gravely harmed as their forest homelands are ruined by logging.

ENDANGERED RAINFORESTS & PEOPLE

Indonesia has the third largest area of tropical rainforest in the world. Southeast Asian rainforests combined are larger than those of West Africa. But logging and other development has destroyed over half of the former rainforests of the region. Logging has played the key role in this destruction. It is the largest direct cause of rainforest loss in Southeast Asia and also plays a precipitating role as loggers bulldoze new roads into pristine forests, 'paving the way' for further destruction. Nyatoh and other woods such as balau, kapur and Shorea are now being sold as replacements for teak in outdoor furniture by a number of stores. These woods are not logged from plantations, but from old-growth rainforests. Loggers have come into violent conflict with indigenous people such as the Penan and Dayak, who have tried to stop logging on their customary lands but to no avail. The governments of Malaysia and Indonesia have sided with the loggers, often arresting and even beating the indigenous protestors. Loggers in Indonesia are eliminating the last habitat of endangered orangutans and other unique wildlife. It's estimated that at the current rate of destruction, orangutans may be extinct within 15 years.

ILLEGAL LOGGING

It has been estimated (and confirmed by the Indonesian government, UN and World Bank) that 75% of logging in Indonesia is being done illegally. Intrusions into park and preserves are so common that there is now permanent infrastructure in the parks for moving logs. Threats, intimidation and bribes keep the logging going. A study also found that 95% of "legal" concessions are operating in some way illegally.

THE CONSUMER'S ROLE

A number of U.S. are selling nyatoh, balau and other woods as outdoor furniture, trying to create demand for these species. These companies include Wal-mart, Target, Pottery Barn, Cost Plus, Restoration Hardware, Sears, Improvements.com, Stacks & Stacks and others.

What You Should Do

Don't buy outdoor furniture made of woods from endangered tropical forests (such as nyatoh, teak, balau, kapur, garapera, jatoba) or endangered temperate rainforests (such as western red cedar, Alaskan or yellow cedar). Recycled plastic can be used for outdoor furniture and will last far longer than any wood. Contact the above companies (see www.rainforestrelief.org) and tell them you will not buy from them until they declare policies to end the sales of wood from endangered tropical forests. Support **Rainforest Relief** with a donation and volunteer to help us stop imports of rainforest wood.

Exposing and Challenging Rainforest Consumption

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