

Sustainable

"Whichever DESIGN HARDWOOD FLOOR you choose, you can be sure of one thing: You'll own a floor created by nature and crafted using the very best technology, with total respect for the environment." Design Hardwood Flooring features bamboo, cork, and sustainable decking, FSC Certified and bamboo ply woods, wheat board, low-VOC adhesives, low-VOC Waterborne finishes. Cork and recycled fiber and underlayments and NO Formaldehyde plywood. We carefully consider the environmental performance of each of our products. We also make extensive use of FSC-certified hardwoods, as well as reclaimed and recycled woods. Good Wood: How Forest Certification Helps the Environment Forest certification is a seal of approval for wood and paper products, allowing consumers to use their buying power for good.

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- Why is it important to protect forests?

- Forests are more than a symbolic ideal of wilderness, more than quiet places to enjoy nature. Forest ecosystems -- trees, soil, undergrowth, all living things in a forest -- are critical to maintaining life on earth. Forests help us breathe by creating oxygen and filtering pollutants from the air, and help stabilize the global climate by absorbing carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas. They soak up rainfall like giant sponges, preventing floods and purifying water that we drink. They provide habitat for 90 percent of the plant and animal species that live on land, as well as homelands for many of the earth's last remaining indigenous cultures. Forests are commercially important, too; they yield valuable resources like wood, rubber and medicinal plants, including plants used to create cancer drugs. Harvesting these resources provides employment for local communities.

- Healthy forests are a critical part of the web of life. Yet more than half of the earth's original forest cover has been destroyed due to human activity such as agriculture, development and logging. Much of the loss has occurred within the past three decades. Protecting the earth's remaining forest cover is now an urgent task.

- What is forest certification and how will it protect our forests?

- Forest certification was launched over a decade ago to help protect forests from destructive logging practices. Like the "organically grown" sticker on produce, forest certification was intended as a seal of approval -- a means of notifying consumers that a wood or paper product comes from forests managed in accordance with strict environmental and social standards. For example, a person shopping for flooring or furniture would seek a certified forest product to be sure that the wood was harvested in a sustainable manner from a healthy forest, and not clearcut from a tropical rainforest or the ancestral homelands of forest-dependent indigenous people.

- Who sets the standards for well-managed forests?

- The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) runs the only credible forest certification program. The FSC is an independent, international nonprofit organization whose membership is comprised of more than 500 environmental groups, progressive companies, forestry professionals, social scientists and groups representing labor, church and indigenous people's interests. Formed in 1993, the FSC has established a set of international forest management standards; it also accredits and monitors certification organizations that evaluate on-the-ground compliance with these standards in forests around the world.

- FSC certification remains the only credible seal of approval for good wood

- How do forest products become FSC-certified?

- During FSC forest-management assessments, teams of foresters, ecologists and social scientists visit forestry operations and inspect their practices for compliance with FSC's standards. For example, they assure that:
 - Harvesting rates and clearing sizes do not exceed a forest's natural capacity to regenerate
 - Natural forest conditions needed for wildlife and healthy ecosystem function are maintained
 - Rare, threatened and endangered species and forest types are maintained and protected
 - No natural forests are cleared and replaced by barren tree plantations; new plantations can be established on agricultural and pasture lands
 - Adequate conservation zones exist
 - Chemical use is minimized or eliminated
 - Streams and rivers are protected from soil erosion that degrades water quality and fish habitat
 - Workers, communities and indigenous people benefit from the forestry operation, and their rights and interests are protected.
- Forestry operations that meet the standards are granted an FSC forest management certification and audited annually. Forestry operations are required to make improvements as a condition of getting certified and staying certified over time.
- Certifiers also grant "chain-of-custody" certifications to companies that manufacture and sell products made out of certified wood. A chain-of-custody assessment tracks wood from the forest through milling and manufacturing to the point of sale. This annual assessment ensures that products sold as certified actually originate in certified forests.

- Where are FSC-certified forests located?

- As of December 2006, more than 200 million acres of forest in 76 countries have received FSC certification. About 47 percent of these certifications are located in Europe, 32 percent in North America, 11 percent in Latin and South America, and 7 percent in Asia and Oceania, and 3 percent in Africa. More than 5,400 chain-of-custody certificates, which allow manufacturers and distributors to label and sell FSC-certified products, have been granted in 74 countries.

- How can I buy FSC-certified wood products?

- Design Hardwood Flooring carries some FSC-certified wood products. FSC-certified products are not always readily available in stores, but consumers can help increase their supply in the future by expressing a clear preference for them when shopping for flooring, and other wood products.