

## What to Look Out for in Recycled Wood Furniture

Out shopping for real wood furniture? Do inspect your target furniture carefully to check it's not made of a deceptive wood-looking veneer over particle board, plywood or synthetics. Pressed woods like particle boards have been known to release small amounts of toxic formaldehyde gas for years after purchase.

If you are concerned about the environment and the greening efforts of our government, you may not like ending up with pieces of furniture at home made from endangered wood species harvested from illegal logging. Do make some diligence study about the makers of the furniture you are eyeing before plunging in a purchase.

Find out from the manufacturer or retailer what the wood the furniture is made of and where it came from. Was its lumber sourced from a managed forest, or was it processed from a banned endangered tree species illegally logged? Of course a guilty retailer will most likely be inaccurate about the facts behind his merchandise. It therefore rests on the buyer to seek out the right information. Knowing the wood name is a start.

Google it on the net and you may learn if it's a protected tree species or not. Bear in mind that illegal logging of protected or endangered tree species not only denudes our forests but disturbs and often destroys the fragile forest ecosystems, disrupting wildlife habits and further aggravating their endangerment. And patronizing wood furniture and crafts sourced from dubious makers indirectly makes you an accomplice to the evils of illegal logging.

Of course, not all wood furniture on the market is crafted from illegal means and using endangered trees. So what should you look out for? When you buy wood furniture check that the item you like bears the Forest Stewardship Council certification mark or the FSC label. A complete but not necessarily thorough listing of FSC-certified wood furniture makers can be found at [www.certifiedwood.org](http://www.certifiedwood.org) and [www.fsc-info.org](http://www.fsc-info.org). You can be certain that the furniture is made of wood grown and harvested from the right place and in an approved manner. Of course, there are other furniture makers who comply with but do not enjoy FSC certification. Check out the wood used. The Convention of Trade in Endangered Species or CITES has a website [www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org) you can visit to check out the endangered tree species listing.

Recycled or reclaimed wood is one other safe option. Recycled wood bears the "Smart Wood Rediscovered" label for wood furniture makers. Smart Wood Rediscovered is a project of the Rainforest Alliance that audits lumber companies and wood builders to ensure their reclaimed wood is sourced in a way that is environmentally sound. You can visit [www.smartwood.org](http://www.smartwood.org) for more information about this.

There is nothing to be cautious about recycled wood in furniture. They are often sourced from the old timber of deconstructed old barns, log cabins, and buildings and reprocessed to be ready for re-use. In fact, because of their old quality, many makers position their furniture as "antique." Bear in mind that wood is timeless.

## About the Author

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