

A precious renewable resource

Teak (*Tectona Grandis*)

A natural material that is a match for nature itself: teak is simply the best and the most durable wood for furniture which is to remain outdoors indefinitely. It will withstand sun, rain, frost, and snow. Even after years outside in the open air, exposed to all elements, the wood remains stable and maintains its form, changing only in colour. It develops, over the course of time, a noble, silver-grey patina. Its natural beauty will endure for decades; without the help of chemicals. Anything made of teak is truly an heirloom.

About the origin of teak plantations

For us teak is more than just a resource: it is a value which we wish to maintain and protect. This is why we have for many years now, been using wood only from plantations.

Teak provided to us from South America or Oceania is delivered by FSC*-certified suppliers only and originates from plantations established more than 45 years ago.

Garpa purchases plantation teak from Indonesia only from commercially based, state-run forestry. Teak plantations of notable size and age are, at present, to be found only on the island of Java. Its commercial forests were established in 1880 and have been state-managed ever since. They cover an area of c.1, 059,000 hectares. The state-run company, PT. Perhutani controls the felling of timber in the Indonesian plantations, thereby ensuring sustainable management. In 2011, for the second time, five selected districts were recertified according to criteria laid down by the Forest Stewardship Council* (FSC).

Garpa, advised by the organization "Deutsche Umwelthilfe", became one of the first enterprises in Europe to apply for product-certification (COC) in line with FSC guidelines. In October 1998 Garpa was awarded the certification code NC-COC-016417, which was renewed for a further five years in 2004, 2009, and 2014 respectively. It then became possible for part of our programme to be marketed with certified material.

The EU's FLEGT action plan

Garpa also backs the EU action plan on illegal logging, which has now become one of the dominating themes in international forestry policy. In 2003 the European Commission approved the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan, which is intended to lead reliable imports of legally harvested wood products.

The underlying assumption behind FLEGT is that national laws adequately reflect the three pillars of sustainable forestry: economic expediency, social justice and ecological compatibility. Accordingly, suppressing illegal and promoting legal trade contributes to achieving sustainable forestry and development in tropical countries. Important instruments in the FLEGT action plan are proof of legality for logged wood and voluntary partnership agreements (VPA) between the EU and the governments of the producing countries.

At the beginning of 2014, six countries, among them Indonesia, signed up the directive and agreed to export only legally harvested wood to the EU. None of these countries has yet completed the entire proceedings. Indonesia is currently in the final phase of implementing the system and full recognition by the EU is expected in due course.

In October 2010 the European Parliament passed a ban on importing illegally forested wood in the form of regulation 995/2010, the implementing provisions of which were integrated into German legislation in the form of the Holzhandelssicherungsgesetz (Timber Trade Assurance Act) of May 2011. The regulations came into force in March 2013. From then on, national buyers for all imports into the EU (from countries that have no agreement such as those mentioned above) must prove the legality of the supply chain from beginning to end. FSC-certified wood – which Garpa has been using for years – is not only recognised in its legality, but is also guaranteed in terms of the use of plantations and forests according to the social, economic and ecological needs of today's and future generations.

Appropriate use of valuable resources

Garpa uses such a valuable product as teak only where its specific qualities – absolute weather resistance and constructive durability – are specially demanded. Teak is far too precious to be wasted on cheap products. It deserves the best possible sustainable management and environmentally friendly processing in its land of origin, and the highest appreciation from its buyers. Only in this way will it continue to be available, and be valued in the future as an unquestionably unique resource.

** The Forest Stewardship Council is a non-governmental, non-profit making organisation that was founded in 1993. It concerns itself with the worldwide implementation of environmentally sound, socially responsible, and economically viable, sustainable management of forests and plantations. Its standards are presently the most comprehensive and most widely recognised for the commercial management of timber. Regular on-site inspections are carried out by accredited FSC inspectors (e.g. Rainforest Alliance).*