

American Eco-Teak Heirloom-Quality Furniture That's Good for the Earth

By Will Raap

Teak...the very word conjures images of luxury and lifelong durability. And though it seems like teak furniture is everywhere these days—at unbelievable prices—most of it doesn't live up to the quality standards needed for true outdoor durability. Sadly, most teak harvesting practices are also devastating to the environment. These are the reasons Gardener's Supply has not offered a line of teak garden furniture...until now.

Our new American Eco-Teak furniture is made from top-quality Costa Rican teak, with superior joinery and hardware. Subtle curves, made possible by careful hand finishing, offer unprecedented comfort and beauty. As for

the environmental impact of this furniture, the teak comes from forests that are actually rebuilding, not destroying, fragile tropical ecosystems.

Legendary Quality

- All teak is not alike. Most teak furniture is made with Class C wood, which usually contains holes, cracks or other imperfections that are filled with putty and stained. Some teak furniture is actually constructed with a veneer over lesser wood. Furniture of this grade will look good to start, but will age quickly, developing cracks, loose joints and a rough, unpleasant surface.
- American Eco-Teak furniture uses only solid FEQ (First European Quality) teak, the finest quality available and guaranteed to be free of holes, knots or other defects. After harvesting, American Eco-Teak is carefully kiln-dried to a moisture content of 10 to 12 percent, which makes it amazingly stable and resistant to warping or twisting.
- Most teak comes from Indonesia. American Eco-Teak is grown in Costa Rica, where the soil is richer and the growing conditions are far superior. As a result, American Eco-Teak is more dense, with finer pores and a higher content of oil and silica. Oil and silica are what give teak its natural resistance to wind and weather, so you'll enjoy the outstanding stability and durability you expect from teak.



The Spirit Song Bench

Body-Friendly Design

A beautiful piece of teak furniture makes a powerful design statement in your garden. But shouldn't you expect comfort too? American Eco-Teak is designed and crafted for an outstanding level of comfort that straight-milled furniture can't offer. Study the photos carefully and you'll see that this furniture has subtle design details that accommodate the body's natural shape: Seat backs are curved instead of being ramrod-straight; the generous seats are gently cupped and won't "bite" at the thighs; armrests follow a slight, natural curve; corners are sanded to a pleasing roundness.

Superior Joinery and Finish

- American Eco-Teak craftsmen take just as much care constructing this furniture as they do selecting the wood. They use snug mortise-and-tenon joinery and test fit every connection. You'll never see an L-bracket used as a joint, or see a wood screw driven through end grain. And when you run your hand over a joint, you won't feel a gap or a glue patch. The construction adhesives used are West System Epoxy, famous for its use in marine and aviation applications, and Gorilla Glue, formulated specifically for teak. All hardware is first quality, never-rust stainless steel.
- American Eco-Teak uses thick, structural members, at least 1 1/2" x 1 1/2". This is a place many furniture makers skimp with 1" x 1" or smaller members.
- Some Eco-Teak furniture pieces arrive in panels, ready for final assembly. When it's best to ship a piece fully assembled to preserve its design and structural integrity, that's exactly the way it will come to you.
- We are especially proud of this furniture's finish. Each piece is meticulously hand-sanded and individually inspected for a beautiful, smooth finish. Not only is the finish pleasing to the touch, but hand-sanding seals the wood's pores and extends the life of your furniture.

Teak with a Conscience



Eco-Teak is designed to fit the body's natural shape.



Furniture is held together with sturdy, mortise-and-tenon joints.

- Most teak comes from clear-cut forests in Indonesia. American Eco-Teak is grown in Costa Rica, a country that leads the world in environmental standards.

- American Eco-Teak is grown on abandoned pastureland in Costa Rica. A generation ago, these hilly areas were stripped of trees to graze cattle, leading to widespread erosion. Teak plantations control erosion and provide habitat for Costa Rica's amazing variety of wildlife. The project covers over 1,000 acres and is still growing. New plantings contain a mixture of teak and other species, to more closely resemble natural wilderness.



Although it resembles natural wilderness rather than a plantation, this teak forest is carefully managed using sustainable forestry practices.

- American Eco-Teak is concerned with its social impact as well as its environmental impact. responsibility doesn't end with the trees. The craftsmen who build this furniture receive above-average wages, helping to raise the standard of living in the area. The furniture workshop is a vital part of the community, providing desks and furniture to the local schools, as well as lunches each day. Most of the bridges in the area have been built with the workshop's help.

Caring for American Eco-Teak

What do you need to put on your American Eco-Teak furniture to make it last? Nothing! Many teak furniture makers recommend a wax or oil finish to extend its life. But American Eco-Teak is made from such very dense heartwood that oil won't easily penetrate. In fact, it can pool up, leaving a sticky residue. Without any work, over time your furniture will take on a dignified silver-gray color. This is natural, and in no way shortens its life. If you prefer to maintain the teak's golden tone, use an environmentally-friendly teak sealer and bring the furniture indoors during winter months.

To clean your teak furniture, we recommend a very mild cleaner, such as one part Simple Green to two parts water, and wash the piece using a medium bristle brush and allow to air dry.