

Finally, Eco-Smart Teak Furniture from the Americas!

By Will Raap

The cover of Time magazine on April 3, 2006, read "Be worried. Be VERY worried." As the editors said, "The debate is over. Global warming is upon us—with a vengeance."

A few weeks later, *The New York Times* ran an article titled "Forests in Southeast Asia Fall to Prosperity's Ax", which reported, "The Indonesian government has signed a deal with China that will level much of the remaining tropical forests in an area so vital it is sometimes called the lungs of Southeast Asia."

The earth's forests are its lungs; they produce oxygen, which is vital for sustaining all life. Equally important, forests absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and retain it in their trunks and limbs and roots. This

process of absorbing and retaining carbon dioxide, is called "carbon sequestration". In 2004 *Science* magazine reported that carbon sequestration has the potential to offset 5 to 15 percent of the current annual greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing or neutralizing greenhouse gasses can result in slowing or even reversing global warming.



In a well-managed teak forest, trees are thinned out so there is room for them to grow straight, with very little lateral branching.

The earth needs trees—now more than ever. Reforestation of deforested land is one of the best global strategies to fight climate change. Since 1999, I have been involved in an effort in Costa Rica, to restore a section of the Mesoamerican "dry tropical forest zone". This unique and biologically-diverse region stretches from Panama to Arizona, and is characterized by its two-season climate: a six-month drought followed by six months of heavy rain. Much of the dry tropical forest of Costa Rica was cut down during the 20th century to create pastureland for cattle to feed U.S. demand for cheap hamburgers. Reforesting these cleared lands with a diversity of native and non-native species has been underway for several decades now. It is an important 21st century solution to climate change that can help restore the lungs of *all* of the Americas. The reforestation of Central America is yielding yet another valuable benefit: a supply of high-quality teak for outdoor furniture. Gardener's Supply did not jump on the teak garden furniture bandwagon in the 1980s and 1990s, even though furniture made from this remarkable tree is the most durable and, some feel, the most beautiful outdoor furniture you can buy.



Poor planting practices of monoculture teak plantations can lead to erosion and the release of toxins into surrounding waterways.

We felt there simply were too many unanswered questions about the environmental and social impacts of extracting this high-value tropical wood in Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar) and Malaysia.

After searching for years, I have found an outstanding Costa Rican supplier of reforested teak products for the home and garden. I've visited their reforestation projects, kilns, workshops and the surrounding communities where their workers live. In making their furniture and other teak products, they use wood that has grown on reforested abandoned pastures. As they've grown, these teak trees have absorbed greenhouse gasses, helped to cool and freshen the air, and provided habitat for diverse plant and animal species. When teak is harvested from these forests, the surrounding trees are unharmed, a new generation of teak trees are planted, and the forest lives on.

You can find less expensive teak furniture. But our American Eco-Teak furniture is made exclusively from First European Quality (FEQ) graded stock, the highest quality teak you can buy. The craftsmen in the Costa Rican workshop use only stainless steel hardware, and meticulously hand-sand each piece to the smoothest finish in the industry. I assure you that this teak garden furniture is second to none in design, comfort and value.



American Eco-Teak is second to none in design, comfort and value.

Before you consider purchasing inferior-quality teak furniture—furniture that may also have a questionable social and environmental history—we hope you'll take a close look at our [American Eco-Teak line](#)

P.S.: Please also consider American Eco-Teak's [Self-Watering Teak Planter](#). Made of Costa Rican teak, these planters will tolerate many years of outdoor exposure and are an excellent value.

