

Wood Recycling

Why recycle wood?

Trees may be a renewable resource, but globally there is a net reduction in forested areas and current rates of wood use are not sustainable. Every year an area of rainforest the size of England is cut down.

1.84 million tonnes of wood waste are produced in the UK every year. While the construction industry produces the most wood waste at 70%, furniture and fencing together account for 8%. Pallets, as used for transportation, account for a further 16%.

The Recycling Process

In most cases when wood is recycled it is shredded into small pieces, the fineness of which is determined by the final application. These wood chips may then be used as animal bedding, coloured and used for surfacing or it may be



reformed into another product such as MDF, chipboard or Wood Polymer Composite (WPC) which can be made with both recycled wood and plastic.

As with many materials, re-use can be preferable to recycling. Wood furniture may not be suitable for you anymore, but it could find a new home through a charity shop.

Where to recycle?

The [recyclewood.org](http://www.recyclewood.org) page allows you to search for local places to recycle wood, both for business and the public.



Wood Hierarchy

When thinking of buying wood products go through this hierarchy first:

1. Repair, restore or adapt something you already have
2. Buy second hand, recycled, reclaimed or waste timber.
3. Buy locally produced timber products that are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.
4. Buy FSC certified products from farther a field.
5. Try not to buy tropical hardwoods such as mahogany, as often at least 30 other rainforest trees must be cut down in order to find just one.

Links:

Recycle Wood

www.recyclewood.org

The sustainable wood information service from WRAP.

Wood Recyclers' Association

www.woodrecyclers.org

Good Wood Guide

www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/resource/good_wood_guide/

The Friends of the Earth good wood guide.