

U.S. HARDWOOD

A GLOBAL LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY

In Brief:

- By definition, “sustainable” means to create and maintain conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony. More simply, “sustainability” means meeting today’s needs while conserving the resources needed for tomorrow. Due to the intensive application of best management practices, the hardwood forests of the United States support a vibrant, healthy stand of timber, as well as a large and diverse wildlife population, clean rivers and streams, and a host of recreational activities. And since there is twice as much American hardwood growing than is being selectively harvested annually, it is clear the hardwood supply for future generations is sustainable.

Environmental Stewardship: A commitment to continuous improvement

- *Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) data shows that the carbon stored in U.S. hardwood at point of delivery to any country in the world almost always exceeds the carbon emissions associated with extraction, processing and transport.
- The same LCA shows that extraction of U.S. hardwood has no negative effects on forest resources.
- According to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (for 2012):
 - Between 1953 and 2012 the volume of U.S. hardwood growing stock increased from 5.2 billion m³ to 12.0 billion m³, a gain of over 130%.
 - Between 2007 and 2012, the volume of hardwood standing in the U.S. increased at a rate of 124 million m³ a year (even after harvesting and natural mortality is taken into account) – about 4 m³ every second.
 - U.S. hardwood forests are aging and more trees are being allowed to grow to size before being harvested.
 - The total area of hardwood and mixed hardwood-softwood forest types in the U.S. increased from 99 million hectares (245 million acres) in 1953 to 111 million hectares (274 million acres) in 2012. This area increased consistently and continued at a rate of 401,000 hectares (990,871 acres) per year between 2007 and 2012 – equivalent to adding an area the size of a football pitch every minute.



For more information please see:
thesustainabilityalliance.us or contact
info@thesustainabilityalliance.us



- America’s forests sequester 866 million tonnes of carbon a year, which is roughly 16% of the U.S. annual emissions (depending on the year).
- Simpler designs of products and furniture that use a high proportion of solid American hardwood and that avoid the need for elaborate processing and finishing tend to have a lower environmental footprint.

Social Responsibility: A commitment to future generations

- Forest management in the sector is not intensive, one outcome of the fact that over 90% of hardwood supply in the United States derives from privately owned landowners rather than large timber corporations.
- In the Eastern States, which accounted for 98% of all U.S. hardwood harvested in 2012, there are 9.75 million forest owners, each with an average of 15 hectares (37 acres).
- Only 5% of private forest area is owned by corporations and the average size of corporate holdings is only 133 hectares (just under 330 acres).
- According to the National Woodland Owner Survey undertaken every five years by the U.S. Forest Service, the most commonly cited reasons for owning family forests relate to the beauty and privacy the forests provide, along with wildlife and nature protection.
- The U.S. hardwood industry bases sustainable design on ethically sourced materials extracted and manufactured in a way that supports human rights and basic needs such as sufficient pay, healthcare and benefits.
- Independent studies show that there is a very low risk of any U.S. hardwood being derived from illegal sources or from forests where management practices lead to deforestation or otherwise threaten biodiversity.

Economic Profitability: A commitment to long-term viability

- The forest products industry in the United States is among the top 10 manufacturing employers across 45 states. As well as employing nearly 950,000 people in the industry, more than 2 million jobs are supported through the supply chain.
- The forest products industry manufactures \$300 billion (almost €260 billion) worth of products annually. It is a major contributor to the national economy, representing approximately 4% of U.S. manufacturing GDP.
- For lumber exports, China, Canada, and Mexico were the largest purchasers of U.S. lumber in 2019, with hardwoods representing 69% of the exported value.

Sources

USDA: Forest Resources of the United States, [2012 Update](#)

Sustainable Forestry. American Hardwood Export Council: <https://www.americanhardwood.org/en/environmental-profile/sustainability>

*American Hardwood: Telling the whole story:

<https://www.americanhardwood.org/sites/default/files/reports/download/2020-07/Telling%20the%20whole%20story.pdf>

Status & Trends for the U.S Forest Products Sector, January 2021: https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/gtr/gtr_srs258.pdf

The American Forest & Paper Association: <https://www.afandpa.org/statistics-resources>



For more information please see:
thesustainabilityalliance.us or contact
info@thesustainabilityalliance.us

