



Alternatives to rainforest timbers

THERE IS no present use of rainforest timber (both temperate and tropical) that cannot be met by some other available timber species.

Plantation-grown eucalypts (various species) and macrocarpa (and other cypress species) are becoming more widely available, and are very suitable. New Zealand's huge resource of radiata pine could also be used as a replacement for structural, decking and, to some degree, furniture and finishing timbers. Other sources include tropical plantations overseas, northern hemisphere hardwoods (for example oak and birch) and low-impact portable mill operations carried

out by the customary landowners in the South Pacific and South America.

There has been considerable criticism by those in the timber trade, of the campaign to use alternatives to rainforest timbers. A common call is that there are no adequate substitutes available. Without doubt, complete substitution is not easy and it often involves compromises in appearance and quality. However, the alternative timber sources are improving and expanding rapidly. A newly established Auckland company, NZ Hardwood Timber Ltd, is processing and supplying high-quality eucalypt hardwoods. These are naturally durable and are suitable for replacing virtually all rain-

forest timbers. The excuses for continuing to use rainforest timbers are becoming steadily more feeble.

In recent years there has been a huge increase in consumer awareness of the link between rainforest timbers and rainforest destruction. As a timber buyer you are in a powerful position to steer the timber trade towards more environmentally sound sources. Before buying timber, question the source and forest management, and ask for documentation.

Timber suppliers and retailers must be held accountable for the products they are selling. By buying with a new environmental sensitivity, you can save rainforests.

Alternative timbers	Rainforest timbers commonly used in New Zealand										
	Balau, Giam, Chengal, Kempas		Kwila, Balau Kamarere,Teak Vitx, NZ Beech		Kiolo, Chengal, Western red cedar	Kiolo, Lauan, Ramin, Tuan, Jelutong, Salusalu, Erima, Sapele, Rimu, Kahikatea, Tawa, NZ Beech				Fijian Kauri	
	U S E S										
	Structural	Decking	Exterior joinery	Weather-boarding	Furniture	Interior joinery	Panelling flooring	Finishing work	Mouldings	Marine ply	Other plys
Locally grown											
Radiata pine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Douglas fir	✓					✓					
Eucalypts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Macrocarpa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Oak			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Customwood					✓	✓	✓		✓		
Recycled timber	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Imported											
Hoop pine									✓	✓	✓
Rubberwood					✓	✓		✓	✓		