

Local Wood Products and Urban Lumber Benefit Community and Economy



We are surrounded by wood. Wood is in our houses as furniture, flooring, cabinetry and more. Our houses are built of wood. Yet, while we see trees removed from our own neighborhoods every year, most of the wood in our homes came from west of the Rockies, north of the Ohio River, Asia, or even South America.

Buying wood that grew in Athens is better for the community than buying imported wood. Buying local wood creates jobs, reduces fossil fuel consumption for transportation, and cycles money back into the local economy. Buying urban wood, salvaged from tree removal companies, reduces the burden on the county landfill, removes and stores carbon, and guarantees that the wood came from a sustainable source.



The three surfaces of some locally grown hardwoods (from left) Willow Oak, Black Gum, Black Walnut, Sycamore and Pecan.

Local wood production creates local jobs including Sawmill Operations, Millworks, Kilns, and Warehousing. It further supports Carpenters, Designers, and Green Builders.

In Athens, a final wood product can be found within a few miles of the tree it came from, having traveled less than 30 miles on the road.

Local spending has an exponential positive effect on the local economy. It reduces our imported goods and increases our potential exports, drawing money into the community.



A Few Notes about Trees and Carbon

One half of a tree's dry weight is carbon. (Nowak, D.J., 1994b, Atmospheric carbon dioxide reduction by Chicago's urban forest, in: Chicago's Urban Forest Ecosystem: Results of the Chicago Urban Forest Climate Project, (E.G. McPherson, D.J. Nowak, and R.A. Rowntree, eds.) Gen. Tech. Rep. NE-186, USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, Radnor, PA, pp. 83-94.)

Approximately 800 million tons of carbon are stored in U.S. urban forests with a \$22 billion equivalent in control costs. ([Coder, Dr. Kim D., "Identified Benefits of Community Trees and Forests"](#), University of Georgia, October, 1996.1)

A single mature tree can absorb carbon dioxide at a rate of 48 lbs./year and release enough oxygen back into the atmosphere to support 2 human beings. (McAliney, Mike. Arguments for Land Conservation: Documentation and Information Sources for Land Resources Protection, Trust for Public Land, Sacramento, CA, December, 1993)



What happens to all that carbon when a tree is cut down?

When a tree has been removed from Athens' urban forest, it is often taken to the landfill. As the tree decomposes, it releases its sequestered carbon back into the atmosphere as gases.

Beyond the waste of sequestered carbon and increase of greenhouse gases, the removed tree increases the demand on the county landfill.

Alternative uses for the removed tree include mulch, firewood, and lumber. While mulch and firewood certainly have their function, lumber production maintains the most sequestered carbon and has the most value in the local economy.



When wood products are needed,

community trees continue to provide value to Athens as a sustainable

lumber resource, an economic commodity, and a local connection.



For more information, contact NEW URBAN FORESTRY at (706)621-9335, (404) 312-0766, or visit www.newurbanforestry.com.