

Ann Arbor News “Your World” column for 8-29-05: [Ask for Certified Lumber](#)

As our standard of living rises, America’s use of wood for construction, furniture, and paper grows as well: our imports increased by 38% in 2004, to a total of 3.15 billion board feet. Because Canada and the U.S. contain only 12% of the world’s forests, our consumption of wood has far-flung environmental repercussions. Irresponsible logging practices cause great damage to forest ecosystems, water quality, wildlife, and indigenous peoples around the world.

Certification programs have been created to give buyers a way to identify wood products that are made from non-endangered species, and that are grown and harvested sustainably. The certification program run by the non-profit Forest Stewardship Council ([www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)) is supported by major environmental organizations, including the U.S. Green Building Council ([www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)).

FSC certified wood is available locally, but finding it isn’t easy. For instance, although Home Depot and Lowe’s have pledged to eventually phase out conventional wood in exchange for FSC certified lumber, visits to their stores found the salespersons and managers were unable to direct the buyer to FSC certified products.

A list of Home Depot’s FSC certified products is available on their website (go to [www.homedepot.com/environmental](http://www.homedepot.com/environmental), click on “certification”). But no mention of FSC or its logo (“FSC” with a tree and check mark) could be found on these products in the stores. Calls to the corporation’s customer service departments were equally unproductive.

According to a spokesperson at Fingerle’s Lumber on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Ann Arbor, they occasionally sell FSC certified lumber for jobs that have requested it, but they don’t normally stock it.

Ask for FSC certification when purchasing paper products as well. Kinko’s has announced that they carry FSC products, and indeed, a local Kinko’s store employee was able to locate two of these products on their corporation’s master list (thus they are available at all stores). Ask for their “Ultra Bright White,” in either resume quality or card stock, which they routinely use for printing color orders. Although the paper Kinko’s uses in their copy machines is not certified, it does contain 30% post-consumer recycled content.

Next time you are shopping for wood or paper products, ask for FSC certification. As Fingerle’s Lumber put it, “If the market demands it, we will be glad to offer it.”

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