

PACIFIC GREEN FURNITURE

Green fan-like fronds sway in the cool Pacific breeze capturing the essence of the Pacific. Coconut trees. Permanently captured on postcard, they portray an image of serenity, 365 days of blazing summer sun and pure tropical bliss.

you right out into a state of oblivion.

It's sometimes taken for granted because of its abundance. The ubiquitous Pacific symbol is an all-purpose tree and probably the most important in terms of what it can produce. From

- Crack open the nut to eat the white, fleshy meat and drink its sweet, nutritious, preservative-free juice. The flesh of the over-matured coconut can be scraped to produce a milky substance to create a rich cream for fish dishes and other culinary delights.



Coconut trees. Spread a *sulu* or *pareu* on the beach beneath its welcoming partial shade warmed by streaks of sun peaking through the breaks in the fronds. Grab a novel or take a nap with the nature-driven acoustics of waves gently lapping along the beach intermingled with the rustling of crisp coconut fronds. That should knock

fronds to trunk, the utility value is enormous. You can practically build a house from *Cocos nucifera*, or coconut palm, including a range of other products.

- Weave the fronds into a thatch or matting for the roof or a leafy hat to keep the blistering sun out, snip out the rib of the fronds to make a broom.

- It doesn't end there. The dried flesh (copra) can be processed to produce a fine oil that can run a motor engine or fuel a light. There's the cosmetic use too.
- Don't trash the shell. Give it a good varnishing to make bowls and utensils. And if you've seen hula dancers, you know how



those shells can be out to further use.

- Use the husk (coir) as well as the shell, to fuel a fire. Mosquitoes bothering you? Set the husk alight for a natural bug repellent. Shreds of husk fiber can be twisted to form a sinewy rope or *magimagi*.
- And, of course, building lumber from the trunk. To capture the essence of the Pacific, Fiji's international furniture company PACIFIC GREEN has tapped into an ecologically sound business of manufacturing furniture and architectural building products. According to PACIFIC GREEN's Bruce Dowse, the idea was to examine ways of saving trees considering the alarming rate at which the planet is dying out.

PACIFIC GREEN's factory and showroom are on the Queen's Road highway running from Lautoka and Nadi to Suva along the south coast of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu. You will see the PACIFIC GREEN sign between The Fijian Resort and Sigatoka town in the province of Nadroga.

PACIFIC GREEN furniture and architectural products are produced to achieve a Pacific look; a look that brings out the region's cultural richness. Palmwood furniture designs are a classic combination of modern and traditional with comfort written all over it. The designs reflect the crafts of ancient Pacific seafarers and warriors – war canoes and even shield.

Sticking with their environmentally friendly principle, materials for PACIFIC GREEN products are from senile coconut plantations that are over

sixty years old. In the spirit of environmental correctness, no chemicals are used in the treatment process. It's an all-natural process – wind to dry the wood, then it's salted and smoked. That's how they've been doing it in Papua New Guinea for 10,000 years. And Papua New Guinea is fundamentally where palmwood use started for PACIFIC GREEN.

Why palmwood? Well, for starters, it's a lot more durable and strong with a comparable hardness to ebony, kwilla or jarrah. And it's a highly flexible product. That quality is visible during hurricanes or cyclones – swaying and bending with remarkable staying power.

Palmwood repels white ants and is generally insect resistant. Those are wonderful qualities to have in furniture wood. Palmwood derives its resistance from the high silica content in the sand, which is consumed by the palm, and the tars from the smoking process.

The company uses non-toxic, water-based paints, lacquers and finishes and their leathers are vegetable-tanned rather than chrome-tanned.

You'll find their products in Hawaii, eastern states of the United States, England, Seoul and Turkey for instance. And there are plans to expand into other countries. PACIFIC GREEN, with its Pure Pacific Style, is paving the way in the Pacific for a sustainable future. □

This Article is a courtesy of Islands, Air Pacific's Inflight Magazine.