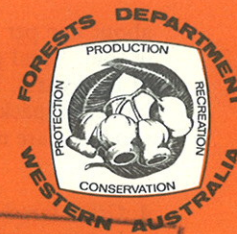




INFORMATION SHEET



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PRODUCTION from Western Australian forests

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Western Australia has no native softwood forests and therefore has had to use local hardwood timber for practically all purposes—even for uses where softwoods would be more suitable. This situation will change as increasing areas of our pine plantations reach merchantable size. In 1972 plantation pine (softwood) accounted for only 6 per cent of the State's total sawn production, in contrast to the world average consumption of approximately 80 per cent softwood and 20 per cent hardwood.

Western Australia's forest products may be considered under four main headings:

1. Sawnwood—the major product
2. Roundwood and splitwood
3. Wood manufactures
4. Other products

1. Sawnwood

In recent years sawn output has averaged some 450 000 m³ per annum of which jarrah and karri are by far the most important timbers. The proportion of the main species and the type of sawn material produced is shown in the accompanying histograms.

The volume of sleepers and crossings produced in any one year can fluctuate markedly depending on new railway line construction locally, interstate or overseas.

2. Roundwood and splitwood

Into this category fall poles and piles—about 350 000 lineal metres each year—mining timber (about 10 000

tonnes per annum), fence posts and rails (200 000-250 000 each year), firewood, beansticks, etc.

In the early 1900s the production of firewood for domestic and industrial purposes, either in the round, split, or sawn, reached a peak of over one million tonnes per annum. Most of this was used in the generation of power in the "Golden Mile" of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. With the introduction of other fuels production fell and currently some 250 000-300 000 tonnes are produced from Crown land each year.

3. Wood manufactures

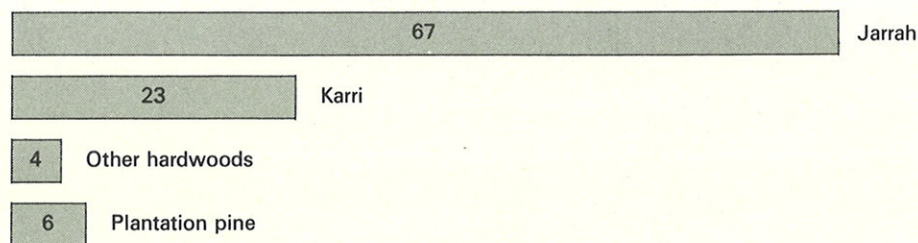
This heading includes chipboard (particle board), plywood, cases, crates, boxes, barrels and casks, furniture, boats, caravans, etc.

The chipboard industry is relatively new and manufactures its product from small thinnings obtained from plantations of both *Pinus pinaster* and *P. radiata*. In 1972 some 38 000 m³ of chipwood logs, or over 50 per cent of all pine production, were used by this industry.

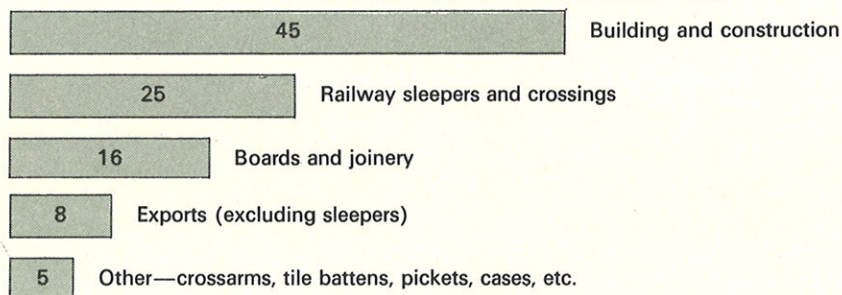
Western Australia has the highest per capita consumption of plywood of all Australian States. In 1972, over 3 600 m³ of pine logs, some 5 500 m³ of karri, and 1 100 m³ of jarrah logs were used in local plywood mills. However, imported hardwood logs, mostly from Malaysia, form the bulk of supplies at present.

Both hardwood (jarrah and karri) and softwood cases are produced. Jarrah and karri cases account for

SAWN PRODUCTION-BY SPECIES (%)



TYPE OF SAWN PRODUCTION (%)



about one per cent of the State's total sawn hardwood output. Local pine is used, not only in the manufacture of fruit cases, but also for vegetable crates, pallets and industrial packaging. About 20 per cent of all pine logs produced are used for these items.

4. Other forest products

Included in this category are sandalwood, charcoal, tannin, honey, boronia blossom and even sand, gravel and stone.

Sandalwood, once exported to China in large quantities for the manufacture of joss sticks for ceremonial purposes, is now obtained only in the Eastern Goldfields region. Production currently ranges from 800 to 1000 tonnes per annum.

The charcoal-iron industry at Wundowie uses some 40000 tonnes of local hardwoods each year in the production of high grade pig-iron. The by-products of wood carbonisation—acetic acid and methyl alcohol—are also separated and marketed.

Tannin, once an important forest product, is no longer in demand and production is negligible. The bark of brown mallet and the wood of wandoo are the main sources of tannin. Production of mallet bark reached its peak in 1905 when it was valued at over \$300000. After World War II there was a healthy demand for wandoo tannin extract and over 68000 tonnes of wood were processed in 1958. However, this industry suffered the same fate as the mallet bark industry. Nevertheless it is of interest that brown mallet wood is now being supplied in small quantities to a tool-handle factory operating in the Narrogin district.

Many of the trees in our commercial forests are nectar-bearing, the most important of them being karri which can, during a general flowering year, provide up to 25 per cent of all table honey produced in W.A. Marri (annual flowering), wandoo, jarrah and tuart are all useful honey trees.

Boronia blossom is used in the perfume trade but the quantity obtained each year is somewhat variable, ranging from 1500 to 3000 kg.