



## WESTERN HEMLOCK

For wood named after a weed used to poison Socrates because of its similar smell, Western Hemlock is hardly poisonous. It is one of British Columbia's most abundant trees. Sourced from sustainable forests in the region, the USP of Western Hemlock is that it is a light coloured wood with no resin and one can create any finish or colour stain to the wood as desired. Be it mahogany, ebony, walnut or even a natural stain, Western Hemlock is well-suited for this purpose. One can have a door, window, panellings or even furniture which suits the colour palette to add that extra panache to a home. Colour staining the wood can create a very different style quotient, making it a great option for all kinds of decors and furniture. This helps break the monotony and ensures a lasting impression at one's home or office. Another advantage is that Canadian Wood species from British Columbia are conditioned to suit the climate in India. Lumber imported from B.C. is heat treated, kiln dried and seasoned to the correct moisture content to suit Indian manufacturers' needs. It's easy to treat with a simple borate treatment which will give years of pleasure, so one doesn't have to worry about pests or termites anymore. The other added benefit of this wood is that it is very easy to carve where one can create artistic and intricate patterns on the wood providing a unique signature element. One can create contemporary inspired designs where the glue and screw holding is not a problem as compared to other commonly used hardwoods. Each design on the wood will look like a majestic masterpiece crafted where the elaborate detailed design will stand out. Being light weight with high strength and density has numerous advantages. This is why Western Hemlock is the perfect solid wood for doors, windows, furniture, interior woodworking and mouldings.





types of soft woods. We have the boreal forest softwood, the northern forests which surround the globe including northern Russia, Scandinavia and this includes species of spruce, pine and fir. Then we have temperate soft wood which comes from the rainforests on the coast of British Columbia. These temperate softwoods more closely resemble hardwoods for which there is a need in India.

India has its own hardwood. Teak, Sal, Rosewood and many other species are grown in this country, but the demand has out-distanced the ability of India to supply for its own needs. That has led to import of supplies from Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia and African countries. But even these countries are now unable to meet India's future demands. Hence, we see the trend changing from tropical hardwood in India to northern softwood or northern hardwood. If you look at the imports in recent years you will notice there has been a change in the trend in terms of wood supply. Canadians are the largest exporters of wood products in the world. Our country is three times the size of India. We have 35 million people, which is a fraction of your population. Just our state of British Columbia is almost 1/3rd the size of India. We have plenty of room to grow trees and we grow them on a 100 year rotation. We harvest only less than 1 per cent a year which we keep replanting. Our forest will continue to grow decade after decade, century after century, and we will always have sustainable supply of wood. So as India learns to appreciate our wood and the product can be used for - chairs, doors, furniture, windows and any manner of things. They can be used interchangeably instead of hardwoods, but they are coming from sustainable sources. We believe that there will be a growing demand for products from Canada.

**Are there parallels in the type of wood here in India and the kind of wood produced in Canada?**

Absolutely, they can be applied to the same uses, typically teak has been the wood of choice. But India also uses species like oak, beech, black walnut, birch, maple, sycamore and many different hardwoods that come from the north but not from the tropical areas and we also in Canada offer hardwoods from eastern Canada. So we

can provide for either hardwoods to replace tropical hardwoods or we can supply softwood to replace tropical hardwoods as well. We have the choice of both.

**Have you assessed the size of the requirement of the Indian market? Can you throw some light on the demand and supply?**

Well currently there is a supply deficit in India of about 7 and half million cubic meters. Domestic production is claimed to be at 40 million cubic meters of industrial raw wood. I am unsure on the accuracy of the figure though, according to a forecast in 2012 the figure could rise to about 12 million by the year 2020 and 20 million by 2030. Now with Myanmar introducing restrictions on exports from April 1 this year – the reason for the halt in log exports being illegal logging – we expect another 2 million to be further added to the total deficit. In the next three years we could be nudging up close to a 10 million cubic meters of deficit in India.

**How much of the deficit does Canada expect to address?**

We will address a very small part of that – our total supply currently amounts to less than 20,000 cubic meters. We don't expect to be a big player in India in the short term, but what we would like to do is to supply products, play a prominent role in the whole green building and sustainability movement. So whether you use wood from Canada or Europe or from plantations in New Zealand or wherever else we support the use of sustainable forest products. Sustainable development is important to us. As demand increases in India's construction industry Canadian wood can become available. Our job right now is to teach people about Canadian wood and their qualities so that people realise there is an alternative.

**What does your organisation do to drive home the understanding for your products in Indian construction sector?**

Among the many things that we do are taking the message to the media, advertising, seminars and road shows at various venues where we tell local importers, builders and architects about the merits of Canadian wood. We are participating in trade show at

Gandhidham, Gujarat where we will demonstrate the merits of Canadian door frame systems vis a vis traditional door frame systems. We are getting involved in a lot of educational programme. We don't have plenty of resources at the moment but are focused towards approaching a larger group of people and allow the message to trickle down.

**Is there understanding and appreciation for your products in India? How do you market your products here?**

India is a big country and there is tremendously diverse demand for wood. What people like in Kerala may be different from what people do in Karnataka, Maharashtra or in Himachal Pradesh. It varies across the country. I think there is a change and people are beginning to see what we are doing. We are becoming known because of some of our efforts. For example we are doing a product trial with a big furniture manufacturer, we have done successful trials with DS Stores in Delhi—they are a large door manufacturer. We have got a hotel project at Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. As we continue to showcase the use of Canadian wood slowly we will get a foothold in the Indian market. We work with Indian partners, importers like Woodbarn, to push our products in India.

**Tell us about the material advantage offered by your products vis a vis other wood alternatives?**

For one our forests are sustainably managed. We do not cut our forests down and forget about them. We replace the trees that we have cut down since we started harvesting our forest 200 years ago. Some of our forest cover has been sacrificed for cities and agriculture but still 94 per cent of our forest cover remains intact. The government controls all the forest management in the country and we will always have wood available. The most important thing we can offer is sustainably managed forests. Another advantage is that the Canadian Wood species from British Columbia are conditioned to suit India's climate. They are easy to work, carve, glue, are highly treatable, take stains and finish very well compared to India wood. Further Canadian wood grows very slowly. It is not like what you



have in India which you can harvest in 8 or 9 years. Our trees take 100 years to grow. When you have got trees that are old, they are easier to work with, as they are more stable. So furniture makers, and those manufacturing doors, love it. Because the trees are grown slowly, they have certain characteristics that make them somewhat unique; you will find that same kind of quality in northern Europe for the same reason because their forest also grows slow. So I think the fact that sustainability matters, slow grown forests and a wide variety of species that can be used for different applications makes Canadian wood a product people around the world will increasingly see.

#### **What are the trends you see in India in terms of usage of wood products?**

As far as trends are concerned people still like to use a lot of wood. They like to have a solid wooden door as an entrance door, for example. There is slowly a trend towards standardisation of door sizes but it is still in its infancy – most doors are custom made in India – but hopefully standardisation will take hold. The other trends we see are designs and colour changes taking place in furniture. Basically Indians still like to use wood inside homes for appearance or functional purposes than a home in Japan which is also wood culture. India has a wood culture but they don't build many places with wood anymore like they do in Kerala or Tamil Nadu – they are amazing.

#### **What is the feedback you have received post usage of your products?**

We have not had any negative feedback. We have had concerns expressed like the sustainability of products in Indian climate, will they survive termites etc, but when they actually get the wood and use it profitably they seem to be pleasantly

surprised or shocked to see that that things are not as imagined. The reality is not that wood grown in Canada won't survive in India. It is how you use the wood, how you treat it, how you protect it, that's the reality of wood from anywhere.

#### **Would cost be a factor in marketing your products herein India? How does Canadian wood compare with wood from say Myanmar?**

Of course, if you want to compare Canadian wood to teak, we are far far cheaper, so obviously price is important. Wood from Myanmar, if you are talking of teak, is the highest priced teak in the world so anything compared to that is cheap. Any soft wood compared to that is cheap, costing just a fraction like 20 per cent of the price. But there is lot of teak coming from other countries like Tanzania, Costa Rica and Brazil and the quality varies: some of it is good; some, terrible.

#### **Tell us about the institutions and people you are engaging with to push your products and what is the strategy?**

The Indian Institute of Architects, the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, the Forest Research Institute in Dehra Dun, Institute of Wood Science and Technology in Bengaluru are some of the important institutions we have tied up with.

#### **India has got a huge housing problem – there is a big deficit there – necessitating affordable houses. So what can Canada do for us?**

That may not be directly related to the mandate we carry forward to the market place. Directly getting into affordable housing is not really what we are all about but we can certainly provide materials that could be used to make affordable housing. Using your own housing materials would be more economical for you, but

for windows and door and furniture Canadian wood can offer attractive alternatives. It would be cheaper than other alternative available. I can tell you of an emergency where Canadian wood did play a role. When there were floods in the Himalayan region some time ago the need for temporary housing all of a sudden skyrocketed. Some of the devastated homes were replaced with prefabricated wood houses made of Canadian wood. Our wood can easily be shipped, it doesn't weigh a lot, and provides for very quick serviceable accommodation.

#### **Have issues like sustainability and green building in India impacted in terms of movement towards products such as yours?**

There is certainly movement. I think the green building movement is an example that things are happening, but it is still very new in India. Quite frankly, I don't think sustainability is a big concern at this point of time in India. I think price is far more important than sustainability. Will that change?

I think so, for example if you are a furniture manufacturer and exporting furniture to the EEC or North America or Japan, sustainability will be a huge issue. With the growth in the manufacturing sector and increased sophistication, the exports figure will only escalate, sustainability thus will assume greater importance.

#### **What is the outlook for the wood sector in say the next five years?**

I expect in five years Canadian wood products to have a significant presence in the Indian market. They will achieve this by displacing hardwoods, more specifically tropical hardwood from Malaysia. I believe the supply from Malaysia will come to an end in the next two or three years. ♦

### **WOOD SPECIALIST**

Brian Leslie has almost 40 years' experience in various aspects of the wood processing industry in Canada. His work has taken him all over the world to promote Canadian forest products with time spent in the UK, Romania and Africa. He specialises in market and product development for softwood lumber. As a technical specialist with Forestry Innovation Consulting, his aim is to increase the understanding of the softwood products from the sustainably managed forests of British Columbia. With an academic background in commerce and psychology from Simon Fraser University, he has applied his knowledge in a variety of public and private sector roles. He's spent over 10 years as an educator in British Columbia Institute of Technology and College of New Caledonia. He has trained students, professionals and new entrants to the industry to help them understand how to select, process and to develop new wood products. Taking on tough assignments in Romania, South Africa, and Swaziland, Brian is experienced at getting "hands on" with people in processing environments to help companies get the best out of their manufacturing process and to maximise profits.





# Canadian wood products will have a significant presence in India in 5 yrs

Forestry Innovation Consulting is the market development agency for forest products for the Canadian state of British Columbia in India. Its mandate is to promote B.C. and Canadian forest products by building relationships with importers, wood manufacturers and government agencies. This is done by providing technical and product information on the wide variety of timber products available from Canada. **BRIAN LESLIE, TECHNICAL ADVISOR, CANADIAN WOOD FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA, FORESTRY INNOVATION CONSULTING INDIA PVT LTD** spoke to **SHRIKANT RAO** on the sidelines of a conference in Mumbai.

**Tell us what Forestry Innovation is all about - and the mandate of your India wing?**

Forestry Innovation Investment was established in 2003. It is 100 per cent funded by the government of the province of British Columbia as a non-profit corporation. It works collaboratively with industry trade associations, other levels of government including the Government of Canada, and research institutions in researching, designing and delivering market development programs. Forestry Innovation Consulting India Pvt Ltd's role is to promote sustainably managed forest products in India. We also represent the broad Canadian industry apart from representing the state government. We are funded partly by the Federal Government of Canada.

**Tell us of your presence here in India?**

Recognising the prevalent need we commenced Indian operations in 2012. Also at that time something happened to facilitate our entry into the market place. The whole structure of tariffs and non-tariff restrictions in the market place were changing. Tariffs were being

reduced and non-tariff barriers like plant health regulations and so on had been relaxed and Canadian species had been accepted. So it facilitated our entry into the market around 2008-09 and the decision was then taken. Having had great success in developing China was a market for over the last 15 years and the other logical market for us was India, because it is a market of equal size with a growing demand for wood. Hence we decided to have a presence through an office in India.

**It is a fact that India is looking to build its infrastructure and there would be opportunities via projects. What specifically are you looking to do here?**

Absolutely, if you look at the GDP growth that was taking place at that time, you were nudging up at an 8 per cent GDP growth and things were looking healthy. Sure there was a slowdown that took place just prior to the election of Narendra Modi and so on, but we do believe in the long term. India is on a growth curve that is going to continue into 2020-2030s. So we believe that this is a place where

Canadians can do business. What we are trying to do is to promote manufacturing in India by supplying raw materials for manufacturing. Raw lumber, panel products, pulp, are products we are looking to sell and those would be further processed in India into final products.

**Just give us a broad understanding of the products you are now trying to project and market in India?**

We are not a sales organisation. Our objective is to simply promote our soft wood products by getting buyers and sellers to come together. We have two different

