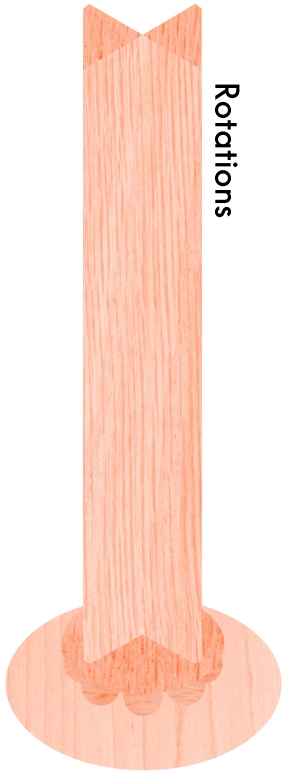
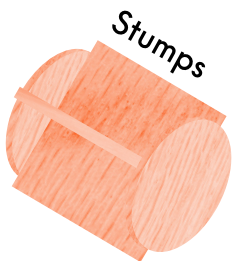
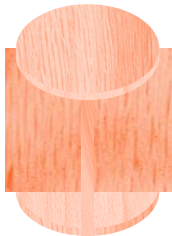


Trees



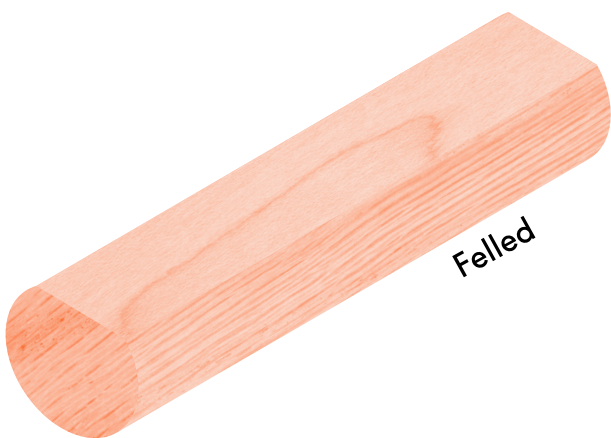
Rotations

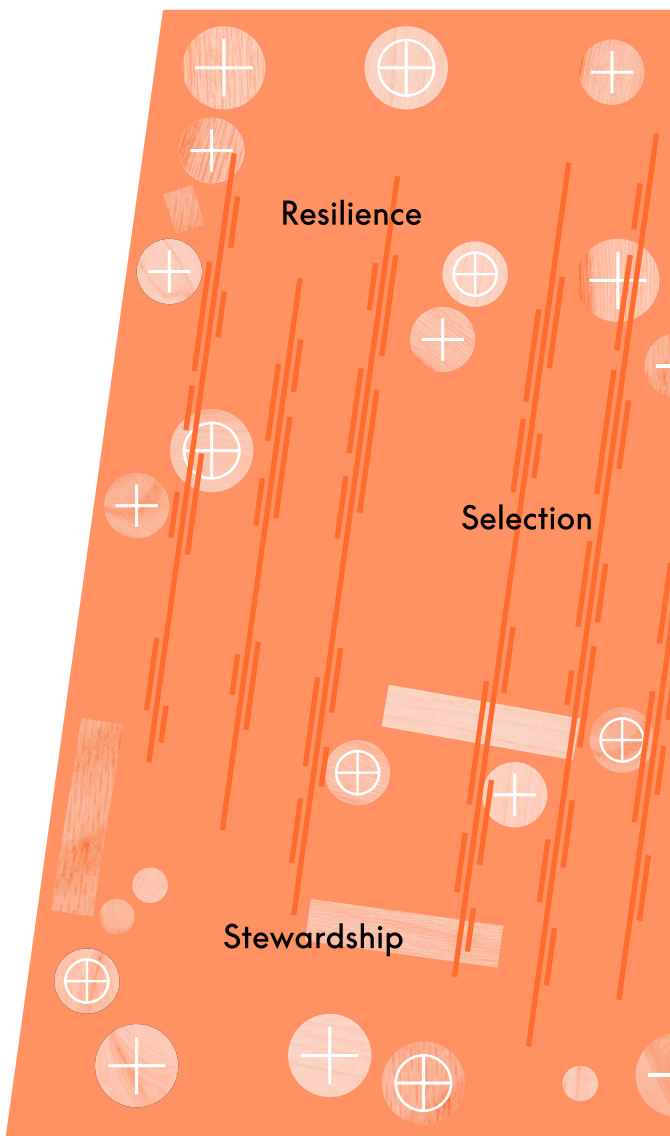


Stumps



WOOD FOR THE TREES





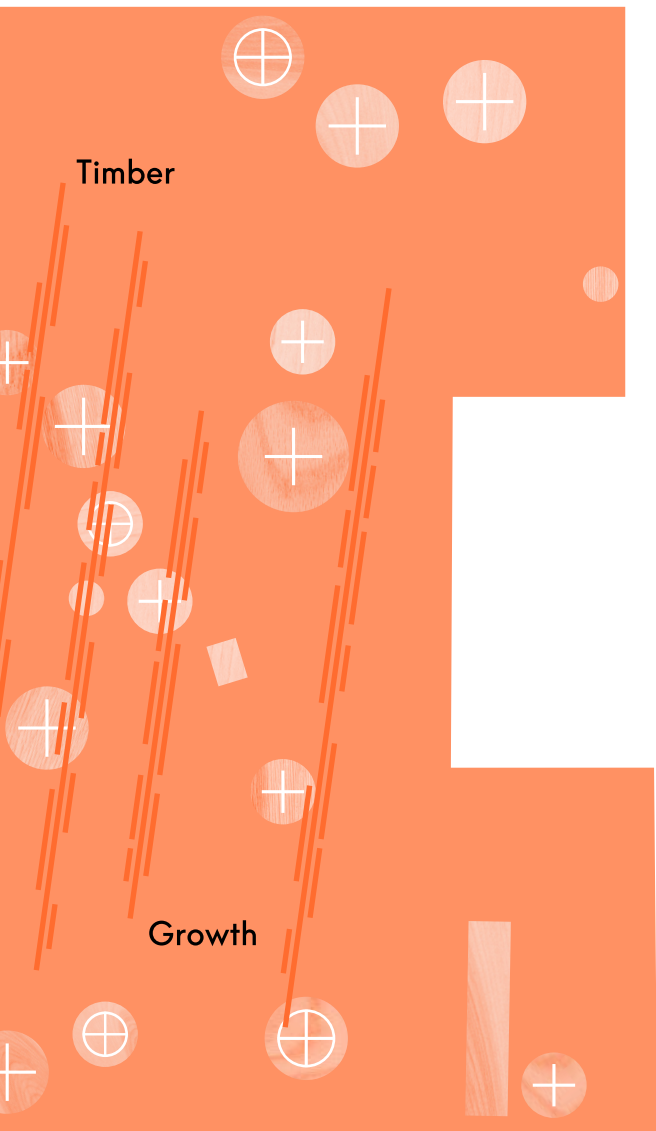
Trees

Healthy forests are diverse in species and age structure. The millions of trees that form the vast forests of the eastern United States have been causing the same amount of cooling as there has been global increase in temperatures. They play a vital role in providing clean water and enhancing biodiversity. These tree trunks represent the trees that remain in forests during harvests.



Rotations

Forest harvest rotations refer to the planned intervals between a forest's establishment and its harvest. Extending these rotation times allows trees to reach greater biological maturity and enhances carbon sequestration. The rotating structures echo the sound of logs in motion, symbolising the cyclical and regenerative nature of forest ecosystems.



Felled

When selected trees are felled they are sawn into planks to be used. Trees store carbon in their roots, trunks, branches and leaves. A single tree absorbs roughly 22kg of CO² annually. Timber planks are carbon stores from the tree's lifetime. The amazing grain in these felled trees highlight how the timber has absorbed the environment the tree grew in.



Stumps

After a tree is harvested the stump remains. These will either grow back from the active roots or will be naturally outgrown by the surrounding saplings as they compete for light on the forest floor.



Canopy

When forests are harvested and the remaining trees are given some space to breathe and drop seed, the forest floor feels the warmth of the sun and regenerates. This canopy is composed of veneer leaves, peeled from logs to expose the intricate structures hidden within.

Introduction

The hardwood forests of the Eastern United States are expanding, growing at twice the rate they are harvested. A century ago, these landscapes had been reduced to 'stumps and ashes'. Today the forest has returned and now covers 300 million acres, much of it in small family-owned properties. The eastern United States is one of the only areas in the world which hasn't seen temperatures rising, a large reason for this being the vast natural regrowth of forest.

While nature takes care of the planting, these forests are far from untouched – they are thoughtfully managed. Foresters and landowners serve as stewards, selecting trees for harvest to support long-term growth, resilience, and carbon storage. When timber is used well, carbon remains locked within it, extending the life of the forest far beyond its immediate footprint.

The timber in this exhibition is donated by family-owned sawmills, reflecting surplus material already in circulation – part of a wider system of care, use, and renewal.

Wood for the Trees sets out to show that using a diverse range of timber a low-carbon material – can incentivise landowners to maintain these forests for future generations to come. It is – quite simply – wood, for the trees.

I



Growth



Trees are among the largest and longest-living organisms on Earth. They can rise over 90 metres tall, weigh thousands of tonnes, and live for millennia, quietly shaping the atmosphere, soil and ecosystems around them. Their ability to reproduce, regenerate and even clone themselves allows forests to persist across generations, adapting to change over time.

Just over a century ago, vast areas of the eastern United States had been stripped of trees, reduced to stumps and ash. Yet the forests returned. In regions such as New England, the Lake States and the Appalachian Mountains, a combination of replanting and natural regeneration restored millions of hectares within decades. Today, these landscapes are once again densely forested.

Growth is not instant, but it is resilient. Here, at the beginning of the journey, we encounter the forest as a living system, one that continues to expand, recover and sustain life on a planetary scale.

||



Stewardship

These forests do not manage themselves. Behind every harvested tree lies a process of thoughtful planning, shaped over decades, and in many cases centuries.

Family forest owners know their own forests intimately. Regular surveys show that they value beauty, wildlife habitat, nature protection and family legacy above all else. Timber harvesting in family forests occurs only occasionally, often just once in a generation.

On larger properties, foresters work with detailed maps to understand the forest as a living, dynamic system, tracking species, age, density, and ecological conditions across vast landscapes. These maps guide decisions about where, when, and how to intervene, ensuring that extraction is balanced with regeneration and long-term health.

Whether family-owned, privately managed or state-controlled, forest planning operates on a different timescale to most industries. Rather than looking one or ten years ahead, foresters often think in cycles of 100 to 150 years, working across generations rather than for immediate return.

On the ground, this strategy becomes tangible. Trees are individually assessed and marked, selected not to meet demand, but for the role they play within the wider forest ecosystem.

What may appear as a simple act of cutting is, in reality, the result of a complex and deeply considered system of stewardship.



Selection

Not every tree is cut. Selection is a careful, deliberate process, guided not by demand alone, but by the condition and life of the forest itself.

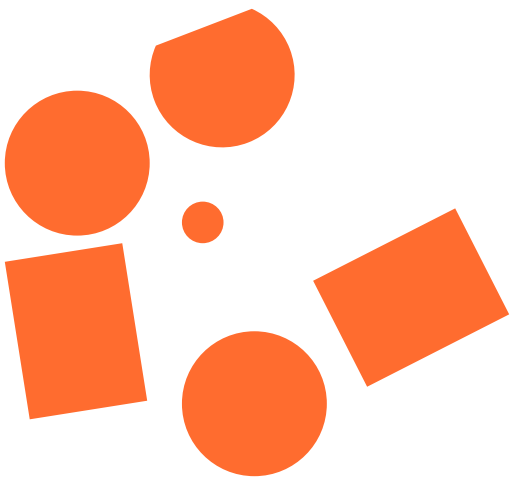
Foresters assess each tree individually. Size and diameter matter, but they are not the defining factors. Instead, attention is given to age, health, and longevity, identifying the moment when a tree should be harvested in a way that supports the wider ecosystem. As one forester describes: it is about understanding 'the age the tree can live without degrading itself'.

Trees may be selected for harvesting due to maturity, disease, or to create space for younger growth. Others are left to continue contributing to the forest's structure, biodiversity, and future resilience.

Here, surrounded by both standing forms and felled elements, the balance becomes visible. Selection is not just extraction, it is a continuous act of judgement, shaping the forest over time while ensuring its ongoing vitality.

IV

Resilience



A resilient forest is a diverse forest. Variation in species, age, and structure allows it to withstand change – adapting to shifting climates, resisting pests and disease, and recovering from disturbance.

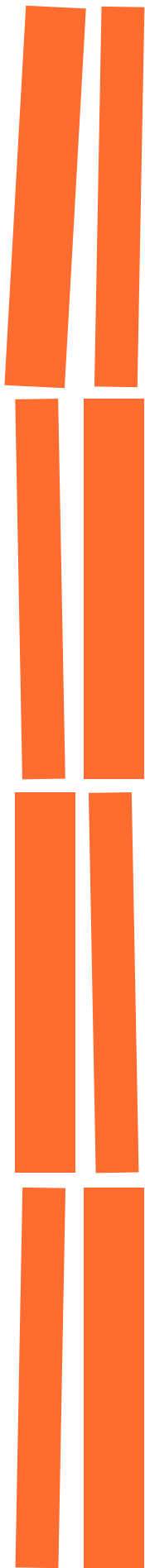
Skilled foresters play an active role in shaping this resilience. By selectively harvesting trees, they open the canopy, allowing more light to reach the forest floor, thereby encouraging new growth, a more varied age structure, and greater biodiversity. What may appear as loss is often part of a longer process of renewal. The goal is not simply to preserve the forest as it is, but to strengthen its ability to endure.

Our material choices are part of this system. As designers, architects, specifiers and consumers, we should be using a wider range of timber species and grades to help support more diverse forests, reducing pressure on a limited selection of trees and encouraging balanced ecosystems.

Resilience operates across scales – from the microscopic capacity of wood to store carbon, to the wider cultural and environmental systems that shape how forests are understood, valued, and sustained over time.

V

Timber



Timber is where the forest meets the human world. Once cut, it carries with it the history of the tree it came from.

Within every piece of wood lies a record. Grain patterns trace seasons of abundance and scarcity, while density and colour reveal shifts in climate and soil. Beneath the bark, the cambial layer once generated this material year by year, building a living archive now made visible through cutting.

As a material, timber stores carbon, locking it away for the duration of its use. In contrast to more energy-intensive, finite materials, it offers a renewable alternative – one that connects extraction, making and environment into a continuous cycle of growth and transformation.

People tell me we shouldn't cut any trees down. I say – well that's a nice idea but it's not very practical. I often talk to people that don't realise that steel and concrete are far more environmentally disruptive than wood as a building material.

Josh Kelly, Field Biologist

The People

The remarkable restoration of the eastern U.S. hardwood forests would not have happened without the people that live in, care for, and depend on them. These forests are places of wildlife and biodiversity, of recreation and food, of livelihood and renewal – valued as much for the renewable materials they provide as for the simple, enduring pleasure of being among trees.

At the heart of this landscape is a symbiotic relationship between people and nature: people care for the forest, and in return, the forest sustains communities. This reciprocity is key to these vast forests' future.

Foresters, landowners, loggers, timber companies and makers all play a part in this interconnected system – working together to steward the land, support local economies, and create jobs, infrastructure and a sense of place for the communities that call these forests home.



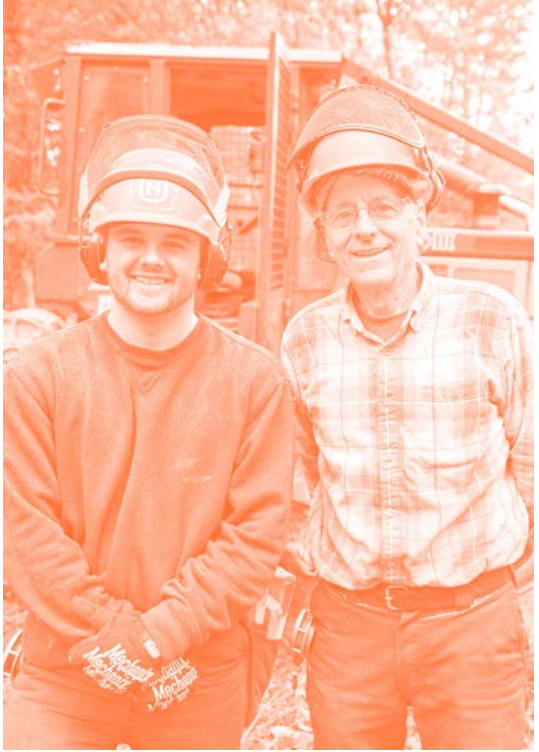
Michael Williams

Timber Contracting Officer for the Allegheny National Forest, overseeing timber management and stewardship within one of the most diverse hardwood forests in the eastern U.S.



Denny and Alex Payne

Grandfather-and-grandson logging contractors whose work reflects generations of forestry knowledge, skill and a close connection to the working forest.



Mira Nakashima

Architect and furniture maker, and daughter of George Nakashima. She is president and creative director of George Nakashima Woodworkers based in New Hope, Pennsylvania, continuing the studio's legacy of craftsmanship and reverence for hardwoods.



Nancy Baker

Forest landowner and environmental advocate, leading *Women and Their Woods*, a programme that supports women in building knowledge, confidence and connection to their forestland.

The Wheeland Lumber family

A fourth-generation family-run sawmill business, based in Liberty, Pennsylvania, continuing a long tradition of responsibly processing and supplying U.S. hardwoods.

Joey Awonohopay

Director of Menominee Language and Culture on the Menominee Reservation in Wisconsin, working to preserve and share the cultural knowledge and forestry traditions of the Menominee people.



The Trees

The vast hardwood forests of the U.S. are among the most diverse temperate forests on the planet. Thousands of species of flora and fauna, shaped by survival through the Ice Age, underpin an extraordinary range of hardwood tree species – carefully managed for both commercial and non-commercial use since the turn of the 20th century.

This diversity enables the U.S. hardwood industry to bring more than 25 different hardwoods to global markets. From the numerous varieties of oak, maple, hickory, gum and birch to the familiar tones of walnut, cherry, elm and ash; from the tall splendour of tulipwood and cucumber trees to the distinctive character and forms of willow and hackberry – this is a material palette of remarkable breadth, one that invites exploration, appreciation and use.

American Red Oak

Quercus species, mainly Quercus rubra

American red oak is the dominant species in the U.S. hardwood forests. A classic looking oak wood with a distinct grain and pale reddish tinge that injects a unique warmth to its finish. It is strong, hardwearing, and the most used hardwood in the USA.

The name derives from the bright red leaf colour in the fall. It's used for a wide range of applications, from furniture and flooring to spatial interiors and structures.



Yellow Birch

Betula alleghaniensis

Preferring cool regions with high rainfall, yellow birch is mostly harvested from forests in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont. Generally straight grained with a fine uniform texture, the wood of yellow birch has a distinct difference between the sap which is white and the heartwood which is light reddish brown. It is heavy, hard and strong, with good bending qualities.



Hard Maple

Acer saccharum, *Acer nigrum*

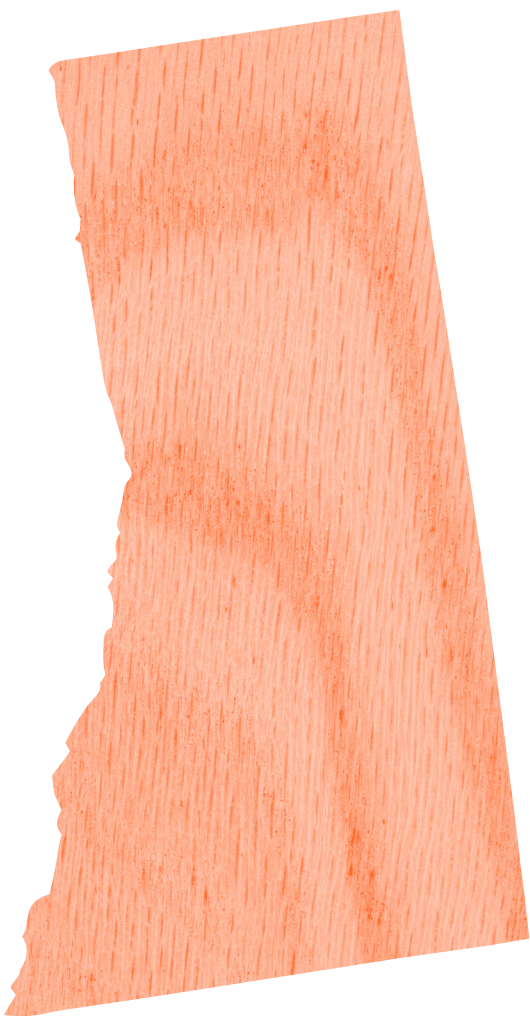
Grown for both lumber and syrup, American hard maple is distinct from other maple species around the world, and renowned for its delicate colour, hardwearing nature, straight grain and fine finish. With creamy white sapwood and heartwood that can vary from light to dark reddish brown, hard maple darkens with exposure to light over time. It is widely used for applications where durability is important, such as flooring, worktops and furniture.



Cherry

Prunus serotina

American cherry is a fast-maturing hardwood species, with an ability to regenerate rapidly after forest fires. Cherry wood has a fine uniform grain, and a smooth texture. Sapwood is creamy white; heartwood varies from rich red to reddish brown and darkens on exposure to light. Easy to machine, mould, sand and stain, cherry wood is ideal for furniture and fine joinery, and is a popular choice for doors, interior panelling and musical instruments.



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10–12 June 2026
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