

MAKE IT **WOOD**

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PLANET ARK

CASE STUDY



Riley Classic Balsawood Surfboards

www.balsasurfboardsriley.com.au

OVERVIEW

Mark Riley has been shaping balsawood surfboards since 1996. Every board is custom built by hand, unique and made from the highest quality Balsa wood. Mark uses Balsa wood because it is fast growing, sustainable, light, strong, easy to cut and shape, and accepts glues and resin with great strength.

ABOUT BALSA WOOD

Despite their wood being very soft Balsa trees are classified as hardwood because of their large, broad leaves. Balsa wood trees grow very fast. In less than 5 years they reach a height of up to 10



'As surfers we enjoy nature on a daily basis more than anybody else. This is why at Riley Balsa we are constantly trying to reduce our impact on the environment. In producing only Balsawood surfboards we have already taken a big step towards more environmentally friendly surfboards.'

Mark Riley, 2012

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metres and a diameter of 50-65 cm. Ecuador supplies 95 percent of commercial Balsa. In recent years, about 60 percent of the Balsa has been plantation grown in densely packed patches of around 1000 trees per hectare. The seeds of Balsa trees are released upon harvesting and as many as 10 seeds may germinate.

WHERE DO YOU SOURCE THE WOOD FOR THE SURFBOARDS?

I import large quantities of Balsa by shipping container rather than via air transport. When Cyclone Yasi brought down Balsa trees in Queensland in 2011 I recovered them for use in my production. In an attempt to reduce my CO2 footprint I have started growing my own Balsa trees near Cooktown in Queensland.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LIKE ABOUT USING WOOD?

I love using Balsa wood to shape surfboards. The lightness, the beauty, every board is unique – no two boards are the same. When the final polish is buffed there is great appreciation by all.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN ADVANTAGES OF USING WOOD?

Compared to normal surfboards Balsa wood has greater strength, durability, flexibility and individuality. It is also more environmentally friendly and longer lasting. It stores carbon - half of the weight of the surfboard is carbon.

