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Composite Plastic Lumber- an Alternative to Wood by Julia Roger

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When you talk about Composite Plastic Lumber, you mean a combination of several materials which include wood fiber, plastic and other inorganic material. The Composite Plastic Lumber is sometimes called natural fiber reinforced plastic. This new material which is being used for outdoor decks, railings, benches, tables, waste bin toys and more, is a recent entrant compared to wood which is being used for ages. As a building material it is still being used for the purpose of non structure.

This Composite Plastic Lumber is resistant to rot but susceptible to soaking of water because of organic wood fiber element in it. An alternative has been devised by some of the manufacturers by soaking the wood fiber in oil which resistant to water seepage. The major draw back of composite lumberComposite Plastic Lumber is that, it is not recyclable because of the composition of various materials and huge amount of impurities. The biggest advantage of the material is it can be molded in any form, including formation of arches, which is not possible in wood and even if it is done from wood there will be a huge wastage and lots of complication in formation. This material does not require any special tool to shear or cut and ordinary tools used for wood is equally good for this purpose. In extreme weather condition, the Composite Plastic Lumber tends to get brittle as the water seeps in because of its porous composition. This material also does not require any paint as it comes in wide range of colors.

The manufacturing process of composite lumberComposite Plastic Lumber is a mix of saw dust, peanut hulls or bamboo straw and virgin or recycled HDPE, PVC etc. The end product is either solid or hollow injection molded to get tables, chairs, parking stop, steps and many other utility items including toys. Unfortunately, this material has high fire risk than wood and tends to melt as it has higher chemical heat content. This is causing a great concern amongst the code officials as it is being contemplated to replace the railway sleepers made out of wood. It costs a fortune to the government exchequer, every year for these replacements and various scientific organizations are working on this to come out of the problem.

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