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Green**A Blog About Energy and the Environment**

May 27, 2010, 2:07 pm

A Plea for Plundered Rosewood

By [BARRY BEARAK](#)

Pieter Bauermeister for The New York Times

Two locals inspect a small rosewood tree that is still standing after being hacked on many occasions.



Two days ago, I wrote in The Times about the [appalling rosewood situation](#) in Madagascar, where timber barons are taking advantage of a weak and unstable government to loot the rain forest of trees found nowhere else on earth. The wood is turned into high-end furniture by the Chinese.

Now the journal Science is reporting on the situation. The article in Friday's issue is brief (a summary is [here](#)), but there are links to supporting material on research by the five authors.

They make the case that Malagasy rosewood deserves the protection of Cites, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Such protection might keep the trees from becoming burgundy-colored armoires and dressing tables. But it is not only the Chinese who covet the rich look of rosewood. Much of the furniture gets exported to the United States and Europe. Some of it appears in the polished contours of beautiful guitars.

Not everything in the article is dour. The authors suggest that a recent decree by the Malagasy government is a "positive change."

come and go, they say, and one way or another, the well-connected timber barons continue to do whatever they want.

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1.

dj76
CA
May 27th, 2010
12:00 pm

Thanks for reporting back on this very important situation. This kind of "plunder" is happening in many places around the world. Madagascar is particularly important due to it's extreme biodiversity and endemism. Any losses here likely mean extinction.

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2.

Ed J.
PA
May 27th, 2010
12:50 pm

Here's to human activity on this planet! It was nice (?) while it lasted.

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3.

Mark
Toronto
May 27th, 2010
2:10 pm

From the main article:

"They feel a reverence for nature — and also an entitlement. "God gave us the forest so that we could take what we need," said Francel, a 23-year-old man who uses only one name. "My ancestors are not angry. There are still many trees in the forest." "

From the Bible: Genesis, Chapter 1:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

And to think that most people on earth are supernatural, irrational and believe in god(s). Talk about depressing....

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4.

Anderson
Poitiers, France
May 27th, 2010
3:49 pm

places, such a tree would be allowed to grow for a while. Kind of like a number of fisheries out there...

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5.

Bob NH

NH

May 27th, 2010

6:57 pm

Isn't it nice that a bunch of rich people in the developed world (CITES) want to set rules that restrict the ability of poor people in third world countries to gain economic benefit of their natural resources?

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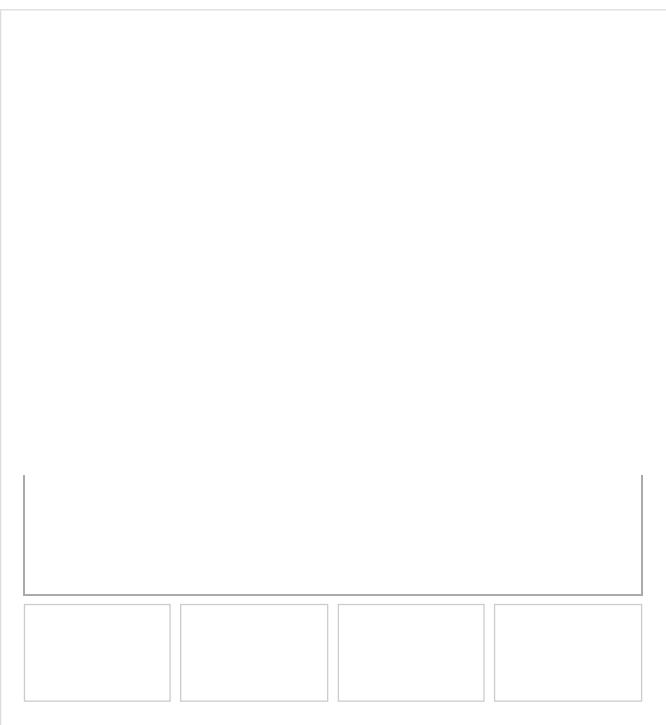
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