



Over harvesting of our forest resources is a major environmental concern. Wood is used for many purposes including construction, furniture, fuel, and paper. Recently there has been interest in using tree-free alternative materials for paper pulp and other purposes. Agricultural wastes, which are normally plowed under, thrown away, or burned after harvest, figure prominently in these efforts. Baltix Furniture Company uses waste from wheat and sunflower to produce particle board panels for multiple uses. The particle board for the furniture shown in this cover photo is a unique composite produced from sunflower hulls, left after processing the seeds for oil or confectionary uses. The colors of the hulls result in a composite that is similar in appearance to traditional burl wood.

The production of agricultural fibers is just one example of the many ways in which plants are used by people throughout the world. *Plants and Society* explores many plants that have made an impact on civilization, including food crops, beverage plants, herbs and spices, fibers, wood, medicinal plants, and fungi. The influence of plants on societies throughout the world is truly remarkable.

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McGraw-Hill Higher Education

ISBN 0-07-252842-7



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