

# Do you know about *Rattan?*



The fine art of furniture making from sustainable, ALL NATURAL wicker and rattan is a time honored skill that has been passed down from generations of craftsman in the South East regions of Asia. The individual time and pride invested in each piece along with the natural graining and color gives a ONE OF A KIND beauty that adds meaning to any living space.

Throughout the Asian Region, it is perhaps the village communities that benefit most from rattan. Rattan gathering and weaving provide employment particularly to the indigenous and local people. Indonesia has by far, the most number of home-based rattan enterprises. Approximately 4,200 households, spread across South Kalimantan, Cirebon, and Central Sulawesi. In the Philippines more than 4,000 workers engage in the production of rattan furniture and handicraft. Income received from weaving rattan is 75% higher than income received from farming. There are approximately 852 square miles of rattan plantations in Asian countries.



## What is Rattan?

Unlike most wooden furniture that comes from the trunk and limb of trees, rattan furniture comes from a type of palm that grows like a vine. There are over 300 species of rattan but only 30 of them are used for commercial purposes. Like the limbs of most palms a rattan vine is spiny, with hundreds of small spikes that grow outwards. The spikes on a rattan plant act as hooks to aid the plant in climbing and latching to other plants while also serving as protection to herbivores.

## What makes Rattan “Green”?

Because Rattan vines are fast-growing, they are a natural renewable resource. The growth of rattan vines depends on healthy trees, instead of depleting them. Therefore harvesting rattan cane provides a profitable “green” alternative to timber logging. Because trees are left standing when rattan is harvested, the raw material can be classified as a non-forest product.



## What is the difference in Wicker & Rattan?

Most people use the word “wicker” or “rattan” to describe our style of tropical furniture interchangeably. Many of our designs incorporate both wicker & rattan features. Rattan looks like a single pole and is the actual the vine that was harvested. Wicker simply means anything woven and refers to the more detailed décor on a piece of furniture. Wicker can be made from small rattan poles, vines, resin or even metal.

## Why is Rattan good for furniture making?

The internal structure of a rattan pole is stringy, much like a celery stalk and when dried into shape it forms a structure that is lightweight, durable and slightly flexible, but incredibly strong; perfect to sustain the weight and wear needed for furniture. It is so strong in fact it is often used in making weapons for martial arts. Much like wood it will accept paints and stains desirable for home decorating.



Rattan can Bend



Bamboo Can Not

## Are Rattan and Bamboo the same thing?

Rattan and bamboo look similar but are distinctly different. A simple way to tell if something is made from bamboo or rattan is see if there is a curve in the pole. Bamboo is harder than mahogany and cannot be bent. Rattan is durable yet flexible, allowing it to bend.

## Where does Rattan come from?

Native to the tropical regions of Asia, Africa and Australia, 70% of the world’s rattan currently grows in Indonesia; the remaining 30% is in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Bangladesh. Because it is easier to harvest and transport than most tropical wood species it provides great economic value to these areas.