

## Global timber shortage increases house prices

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A shortage of timber worldwide is causing a dearth in supply and major problems for the housing and construction industry. The decrease in the availability of timber has caused a sharp spike in the prices of newly built homes

around the world. In some countries, the price builders pay for timber has shot up by about 25 per cent. One of the reasons builders are struggling to get supplies is because people have been repairing or reforming their homes during lockdown. Another reason is that post-lockdown construction and additional DIY projects have created "extraordinary demand". A timber trade federation said suppliers were "working around the clock" but are "struggling to keep up".

Environmental scientists assert that a major reason for the shortage is climate change. Global warming is increasing the pressure on the sustainability of forests. An increase in the number of wildfires is causing great damage to large swathes of forest. Many have been completely razed to the ground. The warmer weather has also caused a proliferation in the number of pests that cause damage to trees and stunt tree growth. Sweden, which supplies almost half of the wood used in the UK, has recorded its lowest timber stocks for 20 years. A solution the UK has come up with is to plant more trees. It said it is "committed to trebling tree planting rates". A builder joked that he didn't have time for those trees to grow.

Sources: [indaily.com.au](http://indaily.com.au) / [bbc.com](http://bbc.com) / [natlawreview.com](http://natlawreview.com)

### Writing

We should stop using wood and use more sustainable resources. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

shortage / timber / supply / problems / spike / homes / builders / lockdown / project / scientists / climate change / pressure / forest / ground / pests / wood / joke / planting

### True / False

- 1) There is a dearth in the supply of timber worldwide. T / F
- 2) The article says the timber shortage increased the price of old homes. T / F
- 3) The price of timber in some countries has increased by a third. T / F
- 4) People doing DIY is one reason for the timber shortage. T / F
- 5) Environmentalists blame climate change for the timber shortage. T / F
- 6) The articles says there were swathes and swathes of wildfires. T / F
- 7) Pests are one reason for the lack of available timber. T / F
- 8) The UK said it would treble the amount of trees it plants. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>shortage</b>      | a. astonishing  |
| 2. <b>spike</b>         | b. quipped      |
| 3. <b>struggling</b>    | c. increase     |
| 4. <b>repairing</b>     | d. maintain     |
| 5. <b>extraordinary</b> | e. areas        |
| 6. <b>assert</b>        | f. dearth       |
| 7. <b>swathes</b>       | g. restrict     |
| 8. <b>razed</b>         | h. endeavouring |
| 9. <b>stunt</b>         | i. levelled     |
| 10. <b>joked</b>        | j. mending      |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of wood?
- b) What could we use as a replacement for wood?
- c) Do you think it is wrong to cut down trees for our use?
- d) How important is the construction industry?
- e) What are house prices like in your country?
- f) How did you spend your time during lockdown?
- g) Have you ever struggled to keep up with something?
- h) Have you ever worked around the clock?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. A shortage of timber worldwide is     | a. number of pests            |
| 2. The decrease in the availability      | b. shot up                    |
| 3. a sharp                               | c. tree growth                |
| 4. the price builders pay for timber has | d. for the shortage           |
| 5. working around                        | e. of timber                  |
| 6. a major reason                        | f. planting rates             |
| 7. An increase in the number             | g. the clock                  |
| 8. a proliferation in the                | h. causing a dearth in supply |
| 9. cause damage to trees and stunt       | i. of wildfires               |
| 10. committed to trebling tree           | j. spike in the prices        |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How useful is wood in our lives?
- What can we do about climate change?
- What do you think of DIY?
- What pests are there that damage trees?
- Why aren't we growing more trees?
- What do you think of the joke at the end of the article?
- What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

## Spelling

- causing a adethr in supply
- the bivatalliyai of timber
- post-lockdown cscototrunci
- get espiupl
- redtyorarnxia demand
- sngitrlggu to keep up
- Environmental scientists rsetsa that
- the syiliusaintbat of forests
- large ewtassh of forest
- a aoeprfioirln in the number of pests
- A sntuloio the UK has come up
- committed to glibnter tree planting rates

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. c	3. h	4. j	5. a
6. d	7. e	8. i	9. g	10. b

## Role Play

### Role A – Changing a Light Bulb

You think changing a light bulb is the most important DIY task. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their tasks. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): fixing electronics, repairing the gutters or fixing a leaky tap.

### Role B – Fixing Electronics

You think fixing electronics is the most important DIY task. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their tasks. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): changing a light bulb, repairing the gutters or fixing a leaky tap.

### Role C – Repairing the Gutters

You think repairing the gutters is the most important DIY task. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their tasks. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): fixing electronics, changing a light bulb or fixing a leaky tap.

### Role D – Fixing a Leaky Tap

You think fixing a leaky tap is the most important DIY task. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their tasks. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): fixing electronics, repairing the gutters or changing a light bulb.

## Speaking – DIY Tasks

Rank these with your partner. Put the most useful DIY tasks at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Changing a light bulb | • Oiling a creaking door   |
| • Painting the ceiling  | • Making a vegetable patch |
| • Making bookshelves    | • Repairing the gutters    |
| • Fixing electronics    | • Fixing a leaky tap       |

### Answers – True False

1 T	2 F	3 F	4 T	5 T	6 F	7 T	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.