

One positive impact of the pandemic is the acceleration of trends about how we nurture a better, more responsible approach to our environment and technology. The data shows that companies, investors, and consumers alike are looking for more resilient and natural solutions as we emerge from the pandemic. The further growth of renewable energy is emblematic of the trend toward a greener, nature-based post-pandemic future.

However, in the case of wind-turbine-blade manufacturing we see a trend away from using natural materials towards carbon-intensive, petroleum-based synthetics like PET and PVC.

Traditionally, Balsa wood has been a key composite material used in areas of critical importance in turbine blade designs. Very few natural materials are directly used in their natural state for such high technology applications. Critical stress loads and temperature fluctuation in the turbine blades are only a few of the demands under which Balsa performs well.

Now, this unique natural material is being pushed out of the wind industry. It is not because of performance. In many cases, Balsa performs better than synthetic materials. Blade manufacturers justify the move to more petroleum-based composites by saying they are increasing the percentage of recycled material in these composites.

If we are serious about greening our planet and keeping hydrocarbons in the ground then we need to commit to using as many natural materials as possible. This commitment to natural materials seems especially important in a symbolically green energy source like wind. Wind energy has the opportunity to not only displace fossil fuels but also lead in the trend towards natural material use.

Balsa wood is a proven composite material that can lead our environmental drive to a greener and cleaner supply chain. Let us talk about what needs to be done to make sure that this wonderful natural material is not displaced. I want to urge the decision-makers in wind energy to make sure Balsa wood receives the planning and investment it needs to ensure its long-term supply.

Balsa wood is an amazing unique natural material. Let's make sure it is a part of our greener future!

