



Just like LEGO building blocks, Mokulock bricks can be used to create large-scale 3D scenes or smaller designs like automobiles or miniature pyramids | Photo source [Mokulock](#)

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NATURAL WOOD, LEGO-LIKE BLOCKS OFFER KIDS A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE

● RETAIL

A Japanese manufacturer leaves the wood in its natural state and does not use any paint, finishing oil or glue

Spotted: Classic toys like LEGO, Mechano and Yo-Yos never go out of fashion, but they can be made more sustainable. That is the feeling at Japanese toy manufacturer Mokulock, where they have created an alternative type of building block – one made from sustainably sourced timber.

The Mokulock blocks very closely resemble standard LEGO pieces but are made from trees harvested in forest thinning, which is too thin to be used for architecture purposes or as furniture. These trees would otherwise be pulped, left to rot or turned into sawdust. Mokulock leaves the wood in its natural state and does not use any paint, finishing oil or glue.

After shaping, the wood is sanded to give a soft, splinter-free natural finish. Each block has a slightly different shade and texture, depending on the type of wood used. Mokulock currently uses timber from Japanese Cherry, Japanese Zelkova, Japanese Bigleaf Magnolia, Birch, Hornbeam, and Maple trees. Some of the blocks also come engraved with quirky scenes and characters for children to integrate into their buildings.

The concept behind Mokulock was very much to nurture both play and a love of nature. The company [says](#) that it values the idea of, “nurturing the hearts of children.” They point out that natural wood has a calming effect missing from brightly coloured, plastic toys, saying that, “Similar to forest bathing, wood has the same healing effect, lowering blood pressure, reducing pulse disturbance, calming the feelings ... and by making it into a block shape, it can also be expected to enhance the imagination given to everyone and the ability to create something out of nothing.”

In many cases, wood can represent a sustainable alternative to other building materials, especially if it is sustainably grown and sourced. Wood also helps to emphasise a connection with nature and can have a soothing effect. Perhaps this is why we are seeing an explosion in the number of innovations involving wood, from [wood cladding](#) designed to aid in sound absorption, to [transparent wood](#) used as windows.

Written By: Lisa Magloff

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Takeaway:

Not only is the use of waste wood for toys more sustainable than plastic, but many experts argue that wood offers much more scope for the use of imagination in play, and can help children (and adults) to develop a greater appreciation for the natural world. As a bonus for parents, the Mokulock blocks are much more conducive to a calm and attractive décor, although they are just as likely to hurt when stepped on in the dark! The blocks are available through distributors in around 30 countries, including the US and Europe.