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Banana veener

When bananas – a massive herb plant – are harvested, the tall stem which produced the fruit becomes permanently non-productive. They are normally cut out to allow other suck stems to grow from the same root base and produce a fresh trunk and subsequent fruit. Following more than a decade of development, Papyrus Australia, an Adelaide-based company, last year opened the world’s first commercial factory and can now take the waste banana ‘tree’ trunks and convert them into a range of building materials, including veneers and fibreboards. The waterless and minimal chemical manufacturing of the fire retardant and water resistant banana product, known as Beleaf, is undertaken on-farm in Queensland’s Walkamin. Beleaf

was officially launched as a wall panel veneer at the Monaco Boat Show in September 2009. European businesses are also eyeing off Beleaf for use in furniture, tongue and groove flooring and acoustic tiles.

