Greenspace Designs have been making sustainably sourced timber furniture for over fifteen years. Our work can be found across the UK from the Isles of Scilly to the Scottish Highlands.

We are now in the process of developing a range of children’s play equipment called Forestplay designed for country parks, nature reserves, urban green spaces and schools. The first stage of this is a series of innovative musical features from wood. Although designed to be hardy enough for the rigours of the outdoors, they are also suitable for indoor use. People of all ages will love playing on these wooden instruments.

At present we offer three robustly built instruments: the Timber Xylophone, the Musical Bench and the Bongo Drum. All instruments are vandal resistant and can be tailored to suit the requirements of the site.

**The Timber Xylophone**

The Timber Xylophone is a vertical xylophone inspired by ancient tribal instruments. The word ‘xylophone’ comes from the Greek ‘xylon’, meaning wood and ‘phone’, meaning sound. There are examples of these instruments throughout the world and all through history.

In Asia and Africa they still have a strong cultural relevance whilst in the Western World they are recognized as a valuable educational resource for children’s musical development.

They can be tuned to all kinds of scales dependant on their size. In Mozambique they have orchestras called Timbila which consist of different sized xylophones. The Timbila are used to enact stories from local culture and history. They have a conductor who leads with poetic narration and melodic composition whilst the musicians add their own partially improvised contributions.
Our Timber Xylophones are made from sustainable, coppiced hazel strung onto a vertical hazel frame that can be freestanding or secured to a vertical surface. Their size is designed so that they are within reach of children of all ages. They have six notes making a pentatonic scale which is one of the most ancient scales used in traditional music all around the world. It is easy to pick out a tune from this scale, the black notes on the piano also use this scale. Timber Xylophones are supplied with hazel mallets with rubber tips to get the best sound possible.

**The Musical Bench**

The Musical Bench is inspired by an ancient instrument sometimes called the slit drum. The slit drum is technically an idiophone, an instrument that creates its sound through vibration rather than a membrane like a normal drum.

Different cultures have versions of the Slit Drum, each with their own name: the Philippines has the Agung a Tamlang; in Zaire they have the Alimba; in Guinea, the Krin; in Bali, the Kulkul; the Pate in the South Pacific; the Teponaztli in Mexico; in the West it is known either as the Slit Drum or the Tongue Drum.

They are usually made by hollowing out a log and creating slits or tongues that vibrate, the bigger the tongue the lower the sound. The hollowed log forms a sound box to reflect the sound out through the sound hole, generally through the slits. Most traditional drums have two notes, one high and one low. The two notes were often used to communicate over large distances, a kind of morse code.

Our Musical Benches have slits carved into the seat of the bench to create four tongues of different sizes and a sound box beneath the seat. When struck, the sound is projected through a hole in the box. The size of the box is carefully calculated to accommodate the length of the sound wave of the lowest note. The tongues are individually carved to tune with each other creating a harmonious sound when played.

Musical Benches are made from English grown timber. Woods, such as oak, sweet chestnut and cedar make excellent soundboards, creating sweet sounding instruments. Each instrument is provided with a set of sticks for playing made from coppiced hazel with a rubber tip to create the best sound from the instrument.

**The Bongo Drum**

Our Bongo Drum is based on a traditional tribal drum. Drumming is a primeval instinct, even apes will beat against objects to create a sound. Consequently drums are the world’s oldest instrument. There are examples of drums dating back to the Neolithic age. Over the centuries they have been used for many purposes including ceremonial, religious, military and communication.

Drums remain as popular throughout the world today. Bongo Drums, which first appeared in Cuba in the nineteenth century, are intrinsic to South American music. They are also often used in musical therapy because they are tactile instruments that can be played by everybody.

Our Bongo Drums are hollowed out from English tree trunks and topped with an enduring metal ‘skin’ that makes a very satisfactory bongo-like sound. They can be freestanding or secured in place and are finished to withstand our outdoor climates. They are supplied with wooden beaters which can be left natural to make a really loud noise, or rubber tipped to create a softer sound.

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**2014 Price Guide**

Prices for each instrument:

- **Bongo Drums** - £105 each
- **Xylophone** - £300 each
- **Musical Bench** - £450 each

Plus delivery, installation and VAT.