

Cooling off by the water

Your pool float is most likely made of *Hevea brasiliensis*, more commonly known as **the rubber tree**. It can be found in many products including latex gloves, baby bottle nipples or condoms. The automotive sector mainly uses it to manufacture tyres for cars, trucks and aircrafts, as it is more resistant than its synthetic cousin derived from petroleum. Rubber is primarily produced in Thailand (32%) and Indonesia (26%) by small producers who are clearing acres of forests to plant this tree that is native to the Amazon rainforest. A highly concentrated production coupled with stressed ecosystems and a global consumption that has doubled in 40 years have led the European Commission to list natural rubber among **the 27 critical raw materials**. To anticipate possible shortages, Europe has created **the "European Union Raw Materials Knowledge Base"** to bring together member states and industry and facilitate the exchange of information on these resources.

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