

TRADITIONAL CORK FLOORING

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Cork: nature's perfect creation.

Cork is the bark of the Cork Oak tree. The trees, grown in the Mediterranean Region, have a life span ranging from 150-250 years. After the first 25 years of growth, the tree is stripped of its bark for the first time, using traditional hand labor methods. This process is repeated every nine years henceforth, at no time affecting the health of the tree. During each harvest, no more than 50% of the bark is removed, allowing the tree to protect itself using its natural defenses. Chemical pesticides and fertilizers are not typically used in the cork forest.

Like the production of the raw material, the manufacturing methods are also geared towards the protection of our environment. To produce cork flooring, virgin cork bark and post-industrial waste cork from the manufacturing of other cork products is ground into small granules. These granules are compressed and baked in molds at varying temperatures, allowing shade variations, from light to dark. This baking process totally controls the shade variations in cork, no stains, dyes or colorings are used in the manufacture of Expanko Traditional Cork products, and those used in Vallares Floating Floors are natural, water based and fade resistant pigments. After being baked, cut into slabs, and sanded, the floor tiles are ready to be finished or for unfinished installations, sorted. Expanko offers tiles finished with matte polyurethane or carnauba wax. All tiles are then hand sorted to assure the highest quality final product. Any rejected material during production is recycled back into the product.

During the manufacturing process, all raw materials are consumed; either for the finished flooring product or as an energy source. Production waste consisting of cork dust and cork oak tree trimmings are burned in furnaces that supply the heat to bake the cork tiles.

Cork, nature's perfect creation, provides durable, beautiful, comfortable floors from a renewable resource. Well-maintained cork floors can last decades.