

About Cork

Cork is the name given to the bark of the cork oak, a tree from the beech family, characteristic of western Mediterranean countries.

The bark acts as a protective shell to the harsh climate changes and numerous fires affecting the region.

Cork trees are stripped of their bark every nine to fourteen years, the tree is never cut and the habitat remains undisturbed.

The properties of cork are derived naturally from the structure and chemical composition of the inner cells. Each cubic centimeter of cork's honeycomb structure contains between 30 and 40 million air cells. Hence cork provides:

INSULATION

Because 90% of the tissue consists of gaseous matter the density of cork is extremely low giving the materials wonderful insulating properties, thermal as well as acoustical.

RESILENCY

When cork is subjected to pressure, the gas in the cells is compressed and volume reduces considerably. When released from pressure, cork recovers very rapidly to its original shape.

IMPERMEABILITY

The presence of suberin, an inherent waxy substance, renders cork impervious to both liquid and gases. As a result, it does not rot. Therefore many consider cork to be the best seal available.

HYPOALLERGENIC

Cork does not absorb dust and consequently does not cause allergies.

DURABILITY

Cork is remarkably resistant to wear, as it is less affected by the impact and friction than other hard surfaces because of the cellular composition.

FIRE RETARDENT

A natural fire retardant, cork does not spread flames and does not release toxic gases during combustion.

Cork waste from the stopper industry (wine corks) and low quality bark are used to produce cork granules. These are classified according to density and grain sizes.

Flooring tiles are produced from cork granules bound with resins and molded to obtain the desired density under pressure and heat.

Cork wear layers can be waxed, varnished, urethane or acrylic coated.

This past decade the floating floor technology has been successfully adapted to cork flooring to produce one of the highest quality floor covering.

Cork flooring parquets and floating floors are quiet, warm, comfortable and easy to maintain, still remaining reasonably priced.

Cork flooring has been used around the world and in this country for over a century.

Yesterday's prestigious applications include:

The First Congregational Church in Chicago, Illinois - **Installed in 1890**

The Mayo Clinic & Plummer Building - **Installed in original building in 1912**

adding some additional cork flooring in 1940 for a total of 300,000 sq. ft.

Falling Water, Western PA, residence designed with cork floors by architect

Frank Lloyd Wright in 1937**just to name a few**

Cork flooring is coming back strongly as architect and designers are very enthusiastic about the distinctive look of the material, the need for better indoor air quality and overall comfort as well as related environmental issues.

Cork underlayment, a lower density material is becoming more and more accepted as an economical and well performing alternative for sound insulation in building construction. Cork, a unique material, combines more benefits than any other floor covering.