



TRADITIONAL CORK *FROM THE FOREST TO THE FLOOR*

TECHNICAL SUPPORT 800.345.6202

Cork is the bark of the cork oak tree. The tree, grown predominately in Europe and North Africa, has a life span ranging from 150-250 years. Cork is harvested using traditional methods that have remained virtually unchanged since the uses of cork were first discovered. Once the tree has reached the correct level of maturity (typically 25 years), the first harvest of cork bark is removed from the tree. The cork is removed by first making an incision using a sharp knife into the bark. After this incision is made, the cork is gently removed from the tree in sections approximately 1' X 3'. The cork is then carried to a centralized location in the forest where it is stacked and aged for a period of 3-6 months. This process is repeated every nine years henceforth, at no time affecting the health of the tree. Hand labor is used throughout the entire harvesting process to ensure that the trees are properly treated and protected. 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 normally used in the cork forest.



The Cork Harvest

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 recycled and ground into small granules. The granules are baked in molds at varying temperatures, allowing shade variations, from light to dark, in the finished tile product. After being baked, cut into slabs, sanded and finished with our natural wax or water-based matte polyurethane, the tiles are hand sorted to assure the highest quality final product. Any rejected material during production is recycled back into future products. Dyes and colorings are not used in the manufacturing of Expanko's solid Traditional Cork products.

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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. Not only does cork provide one of the most durable, beautiful and comfortable floors available, it also helps conserve our natural resources. Cork provides a natural, long lasting floor, which is quiet, comfortable and easy to maintain.

Due to the cultural and financial significance that cork plays in many parts of the world, we are assured of a consistent supply. Additionally, the cork oak is resistant to attack from pests and other predators preventing any catastrophic loss of cork trees. The governments of those countries, which control a significant percentage of the cork forests including Portugal and Spain, have significant penalties for the removal or destruction of cork oak trees. Additionally, these governments subsidize re-forestation and preservation programs to encourage planting and maintaining the cork forest.

Throughout its over half century history, Expanko has maintained the highest level of quality by retaining many of the production practices used for the past 100 years. Expanko is the only company that offers such a wide selection of patterns and colors including our true light, medium and dark shade tile. Expanko sets the benchmark for cork flooring products by designing and manufacturing products to the highest standards using traditional methods of the past in conjunction with new advancements in production. Expanko remains committed to quality and retention of the historical properties of cork flooring and will continue to lead the industry in this direction.

For more information about Expanko visit our website at www.expanko.com or contact Expanko at 800.345.6202.