

## From Tree to Tile: The Amazing Story of Cork

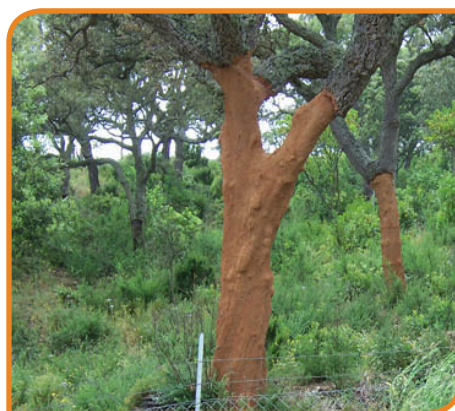
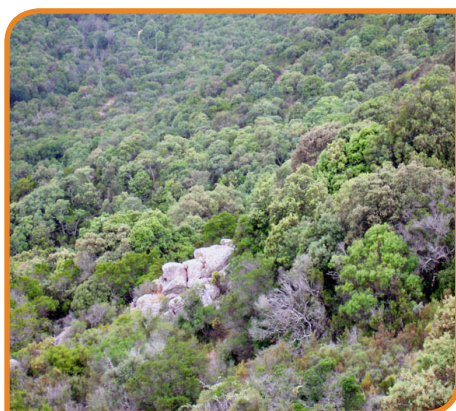
Wine stoppers, fishing bobbers, hat liners, shoe soles, life preservers, baseball cores, car engine gaskets and even floor tiles: natural cork has a wide variety of uses that leverage it's unique attributes to provide excellent performance in a number of ways.

Cork is naturally versatile, flexible, durable, sound-reducing, insulating, antimicrobial and hypo-allergenic, making it an ideal material as a either minor component or a main ingredient to finished goods.

While cork usage dates back to as early

as 2000 BC, few understand the nature of cork as a material, especially when used as a flooring material. However, even a general understanding of what cork is, where it comes from, how it's made and how it was designed can enable others to specify, install and use cork with confidence.

### The Mediterranean Cork Oak Tree



Cork is a completely natural material that originates from the Mediterranean cork oak tree, *Quercus Suber*. Unlike most trees, the bark of the cork oak tree does not carry sap and can be removed without harming the tree. This is what makes cork a sustainable and rapidly

renewable resource.

Once mature, cork bark is harvested every 7 - 9 years and increases in quality with each successive harvest. Over the course of it's roughly 200 year life span, a cork oak tree will produce 10 - 15 harvests of high quality cork bark.

When it's mature, cork bark is carefully harvested using a simple double-blade hatchet. Once the cork bark is harvested, it is dried and stored until it is ready for one of the many cork manufacturing processes that await it.

### The Cork Manufacturing Process



Cork is a ubiquitous term for wine-stopper, which is still the primary usage for cork bark. However, the process of creating cork wine-stoppers also creates a large amount of cork scrap. This pre-consumer scrap is ground into granules

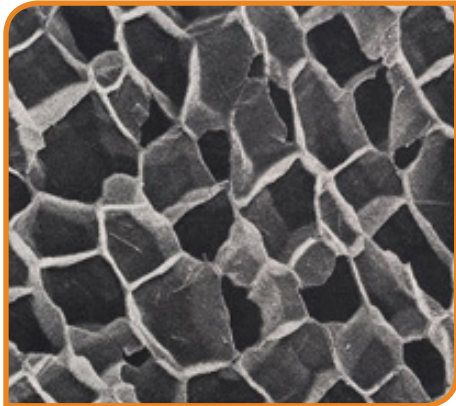
and recycled, where it can be used in a variety of other products, such as cork tile. Nearly every part of the cork oak tree and it's bark is used or recycled.

These cork granules are then compressed and molded into 2' x 3' blocks. These

blocks are baked at varying temperatures to produce the different shades of color seen within the Mediterra line - the darker the color, the higher the temperature and the longer the baking time. Once baked, the blocks are cut into tiles and planks.



## The Unique Characteristics of Cork



### CORK IS CELLULAR & RESILIENT

One of the most unique things about cork is its cellular construction. Cork contains approximately 200 million individual cells per cubic inch, separated by strong, threadlike and resinous membranes that naturally act as a binder. This is what makes cork so resilient and compressible.



### CORK IS IMPERVIOUS TO WATER

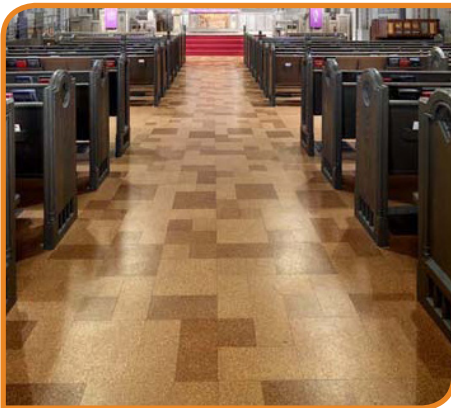
Though cork is cellular in nature, these cells are closed and prevent capillary action. As such, cork does not easily absorb water or liquids and will float - this is perhaps the oldest known characteristic of cork, as its first known usage was as a fishing line bobber.



### CORK IS INSULATING

Cork is 50% air by volume, due to its cellular nature. As such, cork is an excellent thermal and sound insulator - it absorbs and dissipates much of the energy that passes through it due, in large part, to the amount of air within it. This makes it a comfortable, sound reducing material.

## Cork Tile & Plank



Given how unique, sustainable and versatile cork is, combined with its many performance characteristics, cork is an incredible surface for a wide variety of interior spaces. With installations that date back to the early 1900s, cork materials have the longevity of wood, yet the comfort of rubber.

Because of its sound reduction



capabilities, cork is commonly used in libraries, churches, universities, corporate offices and residential applications. However, in recent years, cork has also been used in restaurants, spas, hotels and even healthcare facilities, due in large part to its resilience and durability. Cork can even be used on vertical surfaces as a stylish tackable material that reduces



room-to-room noise.

Homogenous cork patterns can be sanded and refinished for the lifetime of the installation, making it a repairable, long-lasting floor or wall covering. When properly maintained and cared for, cork materials can be a permanent surface solution.

**From Cork Oak Tree to cork tile and plank, The Capri Mediterra Cork story truly is an amazing one. For more detailed information regarding Capri Mediterra Cork Tile and Plank, please see all associated Specifications, Technical Data Sheets, Care & Maintenance and Warranties.**