

Bamboo Flooring

Bamboo is actually a grass that functions as a single plant, self-propagating as it spreads horizontally underground. Bamboo is not harmed by harvesting and can grow into mature fiber in three-and-a-half to seven years. Most bamboo is found in China although India, Japan, Vietnam, Costa Rica, and Indonesia are also commercial exporters. In China, the bamboo is raised by farmers and sent to a Chinese factory to be split, milled into small rectangular pieces, and glued into planks. These materials are then shipped to the US, where it is manufactured into flooring.



Bamboo flooring is available with various patterns: where the narrow side of the piece is seen on the surface (vertical grain,) where the wide side of the piece is seen on the surface (horizontal grain,) and in the more uniform look of strand-woven products, made by laminating discarded bamboo fibers together. Products can be constructed with solid bamboo of one or more plies or with a single layer of bamboo that is cross-laminated on top of wood. Some of the pre-finished flooring comes with a slight bevel between the strips that emphasize the distinction between pieces. This bevel can trap dirt, making cleaning more difficult.

PRODUCT COMPARISONS

Bamboo Flooring

- Durable, hard surface
- Fiber matures in 3.5 to 7 years

Hardwood Flooring

- Durable, hard surface
- Oak takes 120 years to grow to maturity

LEED CREDITS

Using this material potentially contributes to obtaining these credits in the US Green Building Council's LEED certification program:

Materials & Resources

MR Credit 6 Rapidly Renewable Materials

LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. To find out more about it, visit www.leedbuilding.org.

ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTES

Energy Performance

Bamboo flooring has a negligible impact on energy performance at its point of use.



Resource Impacts

Because it can be harvested in as little as three years of growth in controlled forests, bamboo is considered a rapidly renewable resource, which has environmental advantages over finite raw material and long-cycle renewable resource extraction. Compared to a fast-growing pine forest, which supplies the fastest growing wood flooring, about twice as much fiber can be taken from a bamboo forest per year. Depending on the variety and length of maturation, the hardness of good-quality bamboo compares favorably with red oak, so it will provide a long-lasting floor for decades and greatly reduce the cost and environmental impact of less durable flooring.

Health Considerations

High quality bamboo flooring products contain negligible amounts of urea formaldehyde in their binders. However, the market has been flooded with low quality products recently, many of which emit high levels of formaldehyde. The finish can also be a source of emissions. Factory-finished products are preferable, as they have cured outside the building and will have considerably lower emissions. If the flooring needs to be finished on-site, use a low-VOC, water-based polyurethane finish.

Review the manufacturer's product specifications or MSDS (Materials Safety Data Sheets) to ensure the pre-finish is formaldehyde-free and that the adhesives meet or exceed the strict European E1 formaldehyde emission requirements of no more than 0.1 ppm (parts per million).

FUNCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cost

Because of its rapidly renewable nature, good quality bamboo is less expensive than most hardwood flooring; prices start at \$3.50 per square foot uninstalled. Discount warehouses offer lower-priced bamboo products, although the quality might be lower. Review manufacturer warranties and specifications to ensure a good quality product. Quality bamboo manufacturers will warranty their product for at least 10 years on structural material (even better are 25-year or lifetime warranties) and 25 years on the pre-finish for residential applications.

Installation

The product is typically factory pre-finished and can be installed in the same manner as hardwood flooring. Solid bamboo flooring must be nailed or glued to the subfloor, and engineered flooring can be installed as a floating floor, using glue only at the joints. Floating floor products can be installed over radiant floor heating systems. Bamboo is available unfinished and can be sanded and finished on site. Like other solid floorings, bamboo should acclimate outside of its packaging in the room for several weeks prior to installation.

Maintenance

Maintenance is similar to that for other prefinished products, requiring sweeping or vacuuming and the occasional damp mopping. Bamboo flooring can be sanded and refinished like any other solid or engineered wood flooring. The solid "vertical grain" configuration allows more cycles of sanding than "horizontal grain" or engineered products.



RESOURCES

Bamboo flooring is widely available. For up-to-date product and retailer information, search the Green Materials Database, www.builditgreen.org/guide.

Suppliers

Bamboo Depot

635 Indiana Road
Benicia, CA 94510
(800) 568-9087
www.bamboobridge.com

Bamboo Flooring International (BFI)

www.bamboo-flooring.com

Bamboo Hardwoods, Inc

(800) 783-0557
Sales Rep: Mari Strain
(510) 550-4449
www.bamboohardwoods.com

Bamtex Bamboo Flooring

(Mintec Corporation)
(888) 964-6832
www.bamtex.com

Berkeley Design Center

3195 Adeline Street
Berkeley CA 94703
(510) 652-6064
www.berkeleydesigncenter.com

Duro-Design Stained Bamboo Flooring

Quebec, Canada
(888) 528-8518
www.duro-design.com

Earthsource Forest Products

(a division of Plywood & Lumber Sales, Inc)
1618 28th Street
Oakland, CA
(510) 205-7257
www.earthsourcewood.com

Eco Design Resources

633 Quarry Rd. Suite A
San Carlos, CA 94070
(650) 591-1123

Golden State Flooring

6805C Sierra Court
Dublin, CA 94568
(925) 551-4750
www.goldenstateflooring.com

Golden State Flooring

680 8th Street, Suite #169B
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 522-5120
www.goldenstateflooring.com

Golden State Flooring

1060 Commercial Street, Suite #101
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 392-0801
www.goldenstateflooring.com

Golden State Flooring

240 Littlefield Ave.
So. San Francisco, CA 94080
(650) 872-2163
www.goldenstateflooring.com

Green Fusion Design Center

14 Greenfield Ave.
San Anselmo, CA 94960
(415) 454-0174
www.greenfusiondesigncenter.com

McCurley's - Shaw Floor Covering

3191-M Crow Canyon Place
San Ramon, CA 94583
(925) 866-2200
www.shawfloor.com

Mannington Bamboo Flooring

(Mannington Mills, Inc.)
(800) FLOOR-US (356-6787)
www.mannington.com

Mill Valley Bamboo Associates



www.ecodesignresources.com

EcoRep Group, Inc.

(Plyboo)
4723 Tidewater Ave Ste. J
Oakland, CA 94601
(510) 238-9500

Eco Timber

1611 Fourth Street
San Rafael, CA
(888) 801-0855

www.ecotimber.com

EXPO Design Center

1461 Concord Ave
Concord, CA 94520
(925) 288-4400

www.expo.com

EXPO Design Center

7050 Amador Plaza Rd.
Dublin, CA 94568
(925) 479-3100

www.expo.com

EXPO Design Center

1771 E Bayshore Rd
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
(650) 289-6300

www.expo.com

EXPO Design Center

1555 40th Street
Emeryville, CA 94608
(510) 450-3300

www.expo.com

EXPO Design Center

5095 Almaden Expressway
San Jose, CA 95118
(408) 979-3500

www.expo.com

Floor Dimensions

1081 Eastshore Hwy
Albany, CA 94706
(800) 378-4300

www.floordimensions.com

14 East Sir Francis Drake Blvd
Larkspur, CA 94939
(415) 925-1188

www.mvbamboo.com

Prosource

1340 Galaxy Way Suite L
Concord, CA 94520
(925) 609-9448

www.pswholesale.com

Note: Contractor membership required

Prosource

3051 Teagarden
San Leandro, CA 94577
(510) 614-9435

www.pswholesale.com

Note: Contractor membership required

Prosource

320 Swift Avenue
S. San Francisco, CA 94080
(650) 871-9600

www.pswholesale.com

Note: Contractor membership required

Prosource

1701 Junction Court
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 987-0500

www.pswholesale.com

Note: Contractor membership required

Prosource

3410 Industrial Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 573-9117

www.pswholesale.com

Note: Contractor membership required

**Shaw Carpet and Flooring Center/
Concord Discount Floors**

2395-J Monument Blvd.
Concord, CA 94520
(925) 680-7538

www.shawfloor.com

Smith and Fong

(Plyboo)

**Floor Dimensions**

3571 San Pablo Dam Road
El Sobrante, California 94803
(510) 223-3300
www.floordimensions.com

Floor Dimensions

1701 Broadway
Vallejo, California 94589
(707) 552-5252
www.floordimensions.com

Flooring Alternatives

(877) 639-1345
www.flooringalternatives.com

375 Oyster Point Blvd. #3S
So. San Francisco, CA 94080
(866) 835-9859
www.plyboo.com

Teragren LLC

Bainbridge Island WA
(800) 929-6333
www.teragren.com

TICO Bamboo

713 W Duarte Rd G-318
Arcadia CA 91007
(800) 690-TICO (8426)
www.ticobamboo.com

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