

Plantation Compressed and Eco Solid Bamboo Flooring

As with any product, it is important to have confidence in the quality, durability and consistency of the bamboo flooring that you select. Here are some questions you may wish to ask as you search for the right bamboo product and the right bamboo supplier.

1. Is all Bamboo Flooring alike?

Although it may all look the same, quality from different manufacturers and suppliers will differ greatly. The quality of the finished product is highly dependent on the quality of the raw materials used in the manufacture of the flooring and also the manufacturing process itself.

We urge you to be wary of cheaper bamboo flooring on the market. Whilst they may look the same, the difference in the way the floor performs is massive. Cutting costs during manufacture to achieve a cheaper product means the floor is less stable and more likely to move, cup and warp.

It is for this reason that Plantation has spent a number of years building our relationship directly with our supplier and partner, who is the global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of bamboo flooring. We conduct inspections of the production facilities and the raw materials ensuring the highest quality is maintained at all times.

2. Does it matter who I buy from?

We believe it does. The bamboo flooring market is very competitive and relatively easy to enter. Be sure to investigate all options to ensure that you are dealing with a reliable company that offers not just a great price and a wide variety of coordinating products, but can also provide product specification data sheets and manufacturing information, as well as good warranties, sound installation practices and prompt technical support services.

3. Why Plantation?

Plantation offers premium quality bamboo products and have established ourselves as market leaders – with outstanding product knowledge and over 1000 satisfied customers.

The team at Plantation are here to help you with any queries you might have. Our customers include New Zealand's leading home building companies, architects, designers, builders, and numerous home owners.

We are a reliable company. One that offers not only a solid product base and great price, but also comprehensive warranties, technical and installation support, manufacturing information and thorough product testing.

With offices in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, we offer our services and deliver our products New Zealand wide.

4. Our supplier

We have an exclusive partnership with our supplier who is a globally trusted supplier of bamboo product. From owning the plantations where the supply of bamboo is sourced, through to quality control checks after every step in the manufacturing process, with constant attention to technical improvements - our supplier is leading the way with the largest and most prestigious use of bamboo in the world.

With their own research and development team, our suppliers are going into sectors of business that no one conceived of two decades ago, for example; bamboo wind turbine blades, bamboo automotive dashboards, bamboo airport ceiling structures and the list goes on!

With regular visits between ourselves and our partners, we know Plantation have products that no other bamboo supplier in New Zealand can offer.

5. Will the colour be the same as the sample supplied?

Bamboo is a natural product therefore colour can vary from batch to batch. The general colour tone may be different to samples supplied. It's important that you check the colour prior to installation to ensure you are happy with it.

6. How does bamboo compare in hardness to hardwood timber flooring?

Hardness is the main factor in durability. Depending on when the bamboo is harvested depends on how hard the end product is.

We ensure the bamboo used in all our products is harvested at maturity (5.5-6 years) when fibre density peaks.

As a result, Plantation compressed bamboo flooring compares favourably in terms of hardness with other select timbers used for flooring applications.

Numerous tests have been carried out globally and results show that compressed bamboo is 80% harder than Kwila. While most natural timber floors will dent over time, it is difficult to dent compressed bamboo flooring.

Please refer to the Janka hardness graph, available as part of our technical downloads.

7. What happens if my floor gets flooded?

Generally, if your floor is flooded the floor will most likely need to be replaced. If you have been able to clean up the excess water immediately, this can be avoided. As with most timber floors the severity of the flood will dictate the damage to your bamboo flooring.

8. Does dirt build up between the boards?

By following our care and cleaning guide (available as a technical download) you will not have any issues with dirt or dust build up. Our compressed bamboo flooring is an easy to clean flooring option.

9. Can my bamboo floor be sanded and how many times can it be re-sanded?

Yes, our compressed bamboo flooring can be professionally sanded several times.

10. What about light scratches?

Surface scratches can be polished out using Rice Bran oil, or the nut of a walnut. For more stubborn scratches, a product like Briwax can be rubbed in to fill the scratch. Briwax is available through leading hardware stores.

11. How long will my bamboo floor last?

Plantation bamboo flooring comes with a 25 years warranty and will give you years of enjoyment. Adhering to our maintenance and care instructions will ensure a long lasting, great performing floor.

12. Can bamboo flooring be used in bathrooms?

A bathroom is a challenging environment for natural flooring such as bamboo, because there can be a lot of moisture in the air and excessive water can often be left on the floor surface. For this reason we do not recommend using bamboo flooring in bathrooms.

If you do choose to install bamboo in the bathroom, then ensure it is well ventilated and any puddles of water are mopped up quickly.

Caulking compound (such as lock seal) can be applied between the joints to help seal the floor. This will make the floor more water-resistant, but not completely waterproof it.

Please note our warranty does not cover bamboo floors that are installed in a bathroom.

13. Can bamboo flooring be used in laundries?

Yes, Plantation compressed bamboo flooring can be installed in a laundry.

14. Does bamboo flooring react to changes in temperature and humidity?

It is important to take your environment and climate into consideration when choosing bamboo flooring. Local conditions or even a micro-climate within your home can influence the performance of bamboo flooring. This is not a product defect, but rather the effect of the surrounding environment.

Exposure to extreme temperatures and humidity can negatively affect your bamboo floor's overall performance. Plantation bamboo flooring is manufactured with 10-12% moisture content (to suit New Zealand's climate).

In addition, the recommended air humidity level for bamboo flooring to perform at its best is 35%-60%.

15. Does bamboo cup and warp?

It's perfectly normal for a floor to move as moisture levels in the atmosphere vary according to the season. Even floors that are over a century old will be changing with the seasons.

However, a bamboo floor that cups or warps is invariably due to incorrect installation or improper care and use.

Both bamboo and any other timber can swell or warp especially if it has been glued to a "green" or damp concrete subfloor. This allows moisture from the concrete to expand the bottom of the plank at a faster rate than the top of the floor, causing cupping. Our recommendation is to float over new concrete floors.

Other effects are excess tightening which can cause the floor to 'raft' or 'crown', if there is not enough expansion allowed at the edges. This is an installation issue, which results from uneven or insufficient expansion gaps and is usually easy to remedy.

Acclimatising solid boards on site for 7-10 days is also good practice. Please refer to our Installation Instructions (available as a technical download) or call us for more detailed advice.

16. Why don't we grow Bamboo in New Zealand?

The bamboo species we use for all our bamboo products is *Phyllostachys pubescens* (common name: Moso). It is harvested at maturity at 5.5-6 years for maximum stability and hardness.

Moso grows prolifically in China as the climate is ideal for the growth of this particular species.

Moso bamboo can grow up to full height in as little as six or seven weeks after harvest, but then it must be left to mature properly before it is used for flooring.

17. What should I know about the polyurethane finish?

We use world leading German Treffert water based polyurethane on all our compressed bamboo planks. It contains high quality polyurethane resin, which doubles the wear resistance.

The polyurethane is applied under controlled factory conditions. In all there are eleven layers, including two layers of Treffert nano technology that improves the floors resistance to scratching.

This is important for indoor air quality, as VOCs at high levels are hazardous for health. VOCs are present in many building and interior products, including carpet, vinyl, paint and adhesives.

18. What about bamboo stairs?

We have stair nosings to match our compressed bamboo flooring. These are glued down along with the floor boards to make beautiful stairs.

We can also custom manufacture solid stair treads using our bamboo panels for exposed staircases.

Plantation works with partners who offer a full installation service of open and closed staircase systems.

19. What is a floating floor and why are they recommended?

A floating floor is one that is clicked together and laid over a special underlay, much like carpet. This method is quick, with little disruption – it can be walked on instantly.

A floating floor is also cost effective as underlay is cheaper than adhesive. There's no need to move out while the floor is installed as is often necessary with a glued floor, which must be allowed to cure before being walked on.

The floating floor is held around the edges by skirting boards, kitchen cabinets, or aluminum trims. It can be described as a 'gravity floor' as the weight and mass of the bamboo gives it a solid feel underfoot, not dissimilar to a glued floor.

As environmental conditions vary throughout the year, the floor continually adjusts, this natural expansion and contraction is covered by the expansion allowed at the perimeters. This won't be seen as this is covered by your skirting boards and trims.

20. What is the difference between a floating and glued down floor?

A glued floor is permanently fixed to the substrate with a specialised flexible adhesive. This must be left to cure properly before the floor can be walked on.

A floating floor uses the gravity or mass weight of the product along with perimeter trims to hold it in place. Floating floors also use a special underlay which is crush-proof, provides comfort cushioning, acoustic and moisture management, as well as being an excellent draught excluder!

A floating floor is very slightly softer to walk on, while a glue-down floor is subtly firmer.

Not all installation situations or products are suitable for a glue-down floor, while a floating floor can always be installed regardless of circumstances.

21. Will sun change the colour?

The Treffert finish is UV resistant, but it's possible the colour may change very slightly over time, due to the amount of UV in the NZ environment.

Unlike previous solvent-based polyurethanes which can darken or yellow colour almost immediately, our water based polyurethane also helps prevent fading.

22. I've heard bamboo is a sustainable choice?

Our bamboo come from fully renewable plantations, where it is selectively harvested on a 5.5-6 year cycle.

Bamboo can grow to full height in as little as six or seven weeks after harvest, but then it must be left to mature properly before it is used for flooring.

Once cut, the culm will regrow from the base, just like any grass. Timber from trees can take from 30-70 years or even more to reach maturity.

Bamboo also holds carbon dioxide in its root system. Research has shown that compared to trees and other plants, bamboo is much more efficient at dealing with atmospheric CO2 which is good news for climate change.

Bamboo is considered a top environmental choice by architects, builders, homeowners alike.

23. Are you not destroying natural habitat and food source of Pandas?

Some people have expressed concern that the natural habitat and food supply of Pandas will be harmed by bamboo product manufacture.

The species of bamboo used for our products, Moso bamboo is very different to that sought by Pandas and manufacture of our products has no negative impact on the Panda's environment.

24. Will having a bamboo floor help if we suffer from allergies?

Yes, a hard floor like bamboo is very easy to keep dust free for those with dust mite allergy. We suggest using a microfibre dust mop followed by a light spray with water, which keeps dust levels very low.

You can clean without chemicals or detergents, and this combined with the low VOCs will give excellent indoor air quality.

25. Will I be able to have underfloor heating?

The effectiveness of under floor heating will be greatly reduced by the density and poor conductive properties of timber flooring. We think on balance it is better not to have under floor heating.

26. What order do I install flooring in the kitchen?

With a floating floor, we recommend the kitchen units are installed before the floor. Leaving the fitting of toe-kicks and end panels, as well as waterfall bench tops until after the floor has been installed will ensure a much better finish.

With a glued down floor, the floor can be installed before the cabinets. Take care to protect the floor from tradespeople in the installation period.

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