

Shining star

In an age of increased awareness about dwindling resources and climate change, bamboo has become a shining star of sustainability.

Bamboo flooring is being used more and more in both commercial and residential projects where the choice of products used considers the environmental impact of using the product.

Bamboo is an environmentally friendly, renewable resource that has been used as construction material for thousands of years. Ecologically, the harvesting of bamboo does not affect the world's already dwindling timber resources. Technically considered a grass, bamboo has the ability to grow to maturity in four to six years while hardwoods take decades to achieve maturity. The intricate root system remains unharmed during harvesting and starts to grow within a few months thus allowing for sustainable future growth. While other hardwoods are lifeless once cut, bamboo is able to grow again and again.

"While bamboo flooring is inherently an eco material not all bamboo flooring can put in the same "eco category" and specifiers and buyers must know what to look for to ensure they are choosing an environmentally friendly product," says **Paula Taylor of Eco Flooring Systems**. "Bamboo flooring needs to be harvested in a sustainable way. It needs to be plantation grown in monitored forests and legally harvested at full maturity. The **Chinese Agriculture Authority** has banned harvesting of bamboo

in March and April to allow for young shoots to establish strong growth. This ensures the bamboo forests are able to self-regenerate and maintain a natural ecosystem for future harvesting."

Paula goes on to explain that eco friendly bamboo should also feature adhesives that meet international standards for formaldehyde content and coatings that are solvent free and formaldehyde free to minimise VOC emissions.

"Watch out for bamboo flooring glued together with urea formaldehyde and coated in polyurethane," she says.

Other factors to consider when going green with bamboo is the manufacturing process and whether waste created is utilised for creating energy, if the bamboo used is from forest areas that do not violate traditional or civil rights and plants are not genetically modified. The packaging of the finished product should also be considered.

"You can be sure that Eco Flooring's solid **BT Bamboo** flooring provides a true environmental alternative to hardwood flooring," says Paula. "Eco Flooring Systems recognises its responsibility to the environment and has an environmental policy that makes a commitment to only supplying eco friendly products of the highest quality as part of their product portfolio."

This policy includes:

- only environmental friendly products that meet international environmental standards;
- a sustainable supply from



Eco Flooring's BT Bamboo is made from sustainably grown bamboo that is harvested and manufactured to environmentally friendly standards.

monitored plantation bamboo forests;

- a non toxic manufacturing process;
- adhesives and coatings that are all environmentally friendly – no urea formaldehydes;
- recyclable packing.

BT Bamboo contributes to certification under the **Green Building Council of Australia Green Star** rating system. That's why specifiers

choose BT Bamboo for projects such as **Lend Lease HQ** in Sydney and the **Metropolitan Fire Brigade** in Melbourne.

"Bamboo harvested and manufactured correctly makes a beautiful, hard, durable and stable floor and is ideal for any indoor application as an ecological alternative to traditional hardwood flooring," Paula says. ■