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CFR presents a range of different flooring options designed to meet the demands of natural and environmentally-friendly specifications.

Aspire to alternative flooring

Natural flooring has an enduring popularity with consumers, designers, stylists and architects for its texture, character and naturalness.

When **Crucial Trading** launched seagrass 22 years ago, it very quickly became loved for its way, light reflecting fibre and unusual texture. Natural flooring developed a loyal and passionate following amongst consumers who value design and texture.

Along with sisal, seagrass is another product which fits the exceptional category. Seagrass grows wild in the coastal areas of South China and Vietnam, and latterly has been cultivated in the paddy fields as a rotation crop in the rice farming process. It is harvested from the fields, dried naturally, hand spun using simple spinning equipment and taken to modern factories to be woven and backed using modern equipment.

There are no dyes used on seagrass – the fibre's colour is its natural colour. Occasionally dyed sisal yarn is woven into a seagrass floorcovering to create a patterning effect. An added benefit is that the waste from the used seagrass floorcovering is completely bio-degradable.

Alternative Flooring has always been committed to the ongoing wellbeing and protection of the environment. All its products derive from sustainable natural resources. Coir and jute are harvested in India – coir from the strong fibres of the coconut husks and jute from the giant cordgrass plant. Seagrass and mountain grass are harvested in the coast, and mountain meadows of China and Vietnam whilst sisal agave is farmed in Mexico, Brazil and East Africa.

Alternative Flooring wants its product to have the minimum impact on the environment and is constantly exploring ways in which flooring can become both more ethical and environmentally friendly. It has very much paved the way with the launch of The Eco Collection, Nature and Nurture, the first true bio-degradable carpet to be introduced in the United Kingdom.

Sisal is probably the most popular fibre, due to its toughness, through the way it can be woven into different designs and the range of colours available. All of the fibres the company sells, from wool, to coir, seagrass, jute and sisal, come from renewable sources.

Sisal is a successful plant fibre for floorcoverings because it is very hard wearing and dyes successfully. In the early days of sisal carpet, manufactured vegetable dyes were used but were not colour fast enough for use on the floor and many customers found their

carpets colour reacting to sunlight, moisture and age.

As a result modern dyes are now used with sisal. Called reactive dyes, these are made by sophisticated manufacturers and have exacting standards and testing to ensure that they do not use any allergenic or carcinogenic additives.

Mike Richardson, general manager of **Kersaint Cobb** comments: "Sisal flooring is not only made from natural fibre, but is backed with thick latex which forms a barrier for dust and dirt. Its inherent anti-static qualities make sisal the perfect flooring choice for allergy sufferers.

"Regular vacuuming with a standard cylinder cleaner is all you need to maintain a good looking floor. If you are worried about stains, **Latex Stain Resist** is an environmentally friendly polymer shield which can be sprayed onto your flooring when ordered. This forms a useful barrier which temporarily resists the absorption of stains and spills and will prolong the life of your flooring."



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