

Lithofin Stone Care Systems for New Build: Terracotta Handmade and Semi-Handmade Tiles (Classic) System Protection

(i) Successful protection of Terracotta tiles:

Because Terracotta tiles are manufactured from natural clays, differences in colour can occur during the firing process. Terracotta tiles are not as highly fired as other floor tiles, and are considerably more porous, so take care to seal the tiles to reduce their natural absorption characteristics. There are three main reasons for sealing the tiles:

- to protect the brick from wear and tear;
- to reduce staining and maintenance;
- to give an aesthetic finish which will enhance the natural colour and beauty of the tile

Lithofin has produced two systems for the treatment and maintenance of all handmade and semi-handmade terracotta. The Classic System uses the traditional method - a specialised linseed oil with a hardening agent dissolved in it, followed by the use of a paste wax available in shades 'natural' or 'brown'. The Synthetic System is designed to keep the tiles as natural as possible but has three advantages:

- the tiles can be sealed more quickly;
- the sealant lasts longer;
- the finish is oil and grease resistant

(ii) Installation:

Before laying the tiles, open several cartons and inspect the tiles to ensure they are not damaged. Mix the tiles together so that colour variances become mixed, adding to the natural look of the tiles when laid. You should be happy with the colour blend before you start work, as the supplier will not accept any responsibility after tiles have been fixed.

(iii) Cleaning during the fixing process:

Terracotta handmade and semi-handmade flooring may arrive with many different surface finishes - soft and powdery or hard and colourful, depending on the specification and the required texture of the floor. The hard finished surface can easily be cleaned just with water, or with an extremely dilute solution of Lithofin Cement-Away. The soft and powdery surface may need a little more caution, depending on conditions during transit and unloading. Clean with Lithofin Cement-Away diluted 1:10.

(iv) Protection - the Classic System:

This traditional method of terracotta treatment uses Lithofin Antique Primer and a choice of the Lithofin Classic paste waxes (brown or natural).

Sealing with Lithofin Antique Classic Primer:

There are many ways to impregnate terracotta using the traditional method. The impregnator can be applied to the terracotta before fixing (to minimise staining during the fixing process), or it can be applied after fixing but before grouting (to minimise staining from grout residues). The most common method is to start fixing the terracotta tiles and impregnate them as they are laid. Lithofin Antique Classic Primer is a brand new linseed oil-based product containing a special selection of dissolved resin components. These provide inherently better stain resistance, so only one or two coats of Classic Primer will be needed.

As a result:

- total drying time is reduced;
- the likelihood of surface residues of oil is negligible;
- the coverage of this product is about double that of boiled linseed oil

The colour and texture of the tile is still as beautiful as if sealed with regular boiled linseed oil, and is compatible with either a wax or Lithofin Terracotta Sealant. The drying time of this product, due to the reduced numbers of coats required, is between 6 and 12 hours. The only reason for applying a second (very thin) coat would be to darken and enhance the appearance of the terracotta further. The terracotta is now completely sealed and resistant to water, grout staining and general builder's dirt.

(v) Grouting:

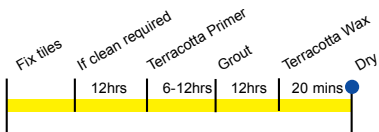
During grouting, the excess is easy to wash off, but we recommend washing with a very diluted mixture of Lithofin Cement-Away. This not only aids the removal of cement residues but also dissolves any inherent salts that may be visible. Allow the grouting to dry fully, according to the instructions for the brand of grout used. Once the grouting is dry and the tile is clean and dry, you may apply Lithofin Classic Wax. This wax has been specially manufactured to provide the following benefits. The paste wax will turn to liquid whilst being rubbed on the raw terracotta. This makes it easier to apply, increases coverage and reduces build up within the grouting lines. The wax is available in two colours, Natural and Antique Brown. The wax is toluene and solvent free, but has a remarkably fast drying time of only 20 minutes. On buffing, it will produce an exceptionally high sheen. Its wear and tear and stain resistance is very high, because of the high solids content.

(vi) Maintenance for both systems:

It is important to maintain Terracotta with a pH-neutral cleaner. Do not use general household cleaners and detergents as they may affect the sealant or wax capabilities and longevity, or detract from the finish. We recommend one of two Lithofin products for regular maintenance. The first is Lithofin Easy-Care cleaner to maintain the surface of the tile as new and the second, Lithofin Ever-sheen, which will both clean the tiles and enhance the surface shine. Lithofin Classic Wax can be used to top up when old wax layers have become dull.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING THE USE OF LITHOFIN PRODUCTS:

1. Suggested drying times



Please note:

these times may be significantly extended, depending on local conditions (seasons, air humidity, room temperature, ventilation, materials used etc.). Humidity measurement of the surface will always provide certainty. It should not exceed 3%.

2. Test area

If no previous experience is available, test the suitability of the product, as well as the processing and the result, in a small area.

3. Information

Always consult the user instructions, and contact us in case of doubt.

This information should be considered informal and non-binding. The products must be used according to local conditions and materials. Where no previous experience is available, or in cases of doubt, test the product in an inconspicuous area.