

## Is linoleum green?

By [Green Living Tips](#) | Published 01/17/2010

### Linoleum - the environmentally friendly floor covering?

I remember having a linoleum floor in our kitchen when I was a kid. The color was burnt orange - weren't the 70's a wonderful time for interior design! :). It was certainly hard to forget our kitchen flooring.

I had always assumed our lino floor was a form of [PVC/vinyl](#) until recently when I discovered authentic linoleum is actually plant based.

According to Wikipedia, linoleum is made from renewable materials including solidified linseed oil, pine rosin, cork dust, wood flour and other materials such calcium carbonate. Calcium carbonate is a plentiful substance; occurring naturally in limestone and in the shells of marine creatures.

The backing of linoleum is usually burlap (a coarse woven fabric made from jute) or canvas. PVC/Vinyl on the other hand is based entirely on synthetic materials and petroleum based chemicals - fossil fuels.

Linoleum has been around since the 1800's and up until the 1950's when fossil fuel based plastics took over, it was extremely popular.

Some of the other environmental and health benefits of linoleum over PVC

- It does not contain chlorine based chemical fire retardants that can release dioxins when burned.
- There are no plasticizers such as phthalates used to give it flexibility. Phthalates were [recently listed as chemicals of concern](#) by the US Environment Protection Agency.
- Linoleum is 100% biodegradable.
- It's generally considered harder wearing.
- It has "self-healing" properties (small dents).
- The coloring and patterns in linoleum permeate through the entire skin, rather than just on the surface as with many PVC based floor coverings.
- Generally non-allergenic - note that some people can be sensitive to linseed oil fumes.

#### Disadvantages

- Linoleum isn't as water resistant as PVC products. However, it was used extensively in kitchens and I certainly don't remember moisture ever causing an issue with our flooring.



*SB* Shari Barley REALTOR® Beyond Your Expectations

Direct 530.305.3131  
Office 530.265.2002  
[sharibarley@gmail.com](mailto:sharibarley@gmail.com)  
[www.ShariBarley.com](http://www.ShariBarley.com)

Top Producer, President's Elite,  
Master's Club Charter Member, CRS, GRI, DRE#1215636

316 Broad Street  
Nevada City, CA 95959



- I've read that some studies have found it to be more energy intensive in its manufacture.
- It can be up to double the price of vinyl flooring, but its durability (thirty to forty years compared with ten to twenty years for vinyl) should be taken into account.

### **Shopping for linoleum**

Linoleum designs and colors have come a long way since our burnt orange kitchen floor of the 1970's. I've seen some wood grain and marble finishes that look absolutely stunning.

An important point to bear in mind when buying linoleum is to ensure it's the real deal as the term "linoleum" is also used to describe PVC/vinyl based products. Something else worth checking is the type of surface sealant used and for an even "greener" floor; look for low or no VOC adhesives compatible with linoleum.

*Michael Bloch*

[Green Living Tips.com](http://GreenLivingTips.com)

*Green Living Tips is an online resource powered by renewable energy offering a wide variety of earth friendly tips, green guides, advice and environment related news to help consumers and business reduce costs, consumption and environmental impact.*



**SB** Shari Barley REALTOR® Beyond Your Expectations

Direct 530.305.3131  
Office 530.265.2002  
[sharibarley@gmail.com](mailto:sharibarley@gmail.com)  
[www.ShariBarley.com](http://www.ShariBarley.com)

Top Producer, President's Elite,  
Master's Club Charter Member, CRS, GRI, DRE#1215636

316 Broad Street  
Nevada City, CA 95959

