



## Home Renovations

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### What is Strand Bamboo Flooring?

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**Question:** What is Strand Bamboo Flooring?

Lately, there has been a lot of talk about strand bamboo flooring. What is this manufacturing method--often called strand *woven* bamboo flooring--and is it any better than ordinary bamboo flooring manufacturing methods?

**Answer:**

**Q: "What is strand bamboo flooring?"**

A: As you may already know, bamboo flooring is made out of a grass, not wood. Because of this, bamboo is highly fibrous. Ordinary manufacturing methods laminate these fibers one on top of the other. But the strand method actually weaves these fibers in an adhesive base, forming a stronger material. Thus the inclusion of the word *woven*.

**Q: "Why is it so important to weave the bamboo strands?"**

A: Because bamboo is a soft material that is difficult to turn into a wear-ready surface. Not only that, but a method of "staining" or browning bamboo flooring called carbonizing or sometimes carmelizing can further weaken the bamboo--up to 30%.

**Q: "Does this mean that bamboo is not appropriate for flooring?"**

A: This depends on your view. Unlike oak, hickory, maple, or other hardwoods, it is not inherently wear-resistant. Even without treatment, hardwood floors wear quite well. Bamboo flooring, by contrast, relies almost entirely on manufacturing methods such as the strand weaving process, core materials, adhesives, and tough aluminum oxide finishes.

**Q: "What is the price for strand bamboo flooring?"**

A: Variable, of course, but I have found strand woven to be about 50% higher than other types of bamboo flooring.

**Q: "Do you have any recommendations for strand bamboo flooring?"**

A: No personal recommendations. One company that keeps popping up with homeowners is a company called Teragren LLC. There are a lot of shifty strand woven bamboo manufacturers, but Teragren appears to be quite above-board: they keep track of and control the entire manufacturing process; they do all the required environmental and "green" things; they are based in the U.S. (Bainbridge Island, Washington). That's about all I can say about Teragren, but I would appreciate feedback from any readers if they have experiences with this company.