

# Lithofin Stone Care Systems for New Build: Terracotta Handmade and Semi-Handmade Tiles (Synthetic) 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;
- and 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 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 Synthetic System:

This approach uses the Lithofin range of synthetic products: Terracotta Impregnator, Terracotta Sealant and Terracotta Ever-sheen.

## (v) Sealing

Most tiles are completely raw and unsealed upon delivery, so great care must be taken not to mark or stain the tile during laying. An application of Lithofin Terracotta Impregnator will greatly reduce the chance of staining from general building dirt and subsequent grouting. Apply a liberal coat of the impregnator to each tile as it is fixed. Coverage of Terracotta Impregnator can vary and depends on the type of terracotta. Please refer to the Terracotta Impregnator product sheet. It dries and becomes effective after only three hours; the tile fixer can then start grouting immediately, thus reducing his overall time.

## (vi) Grouting:

Once the grout has dried (drying time according to grout manufacturers recommendations), we recommend an acid wash with Lithofin Cement-Away for the following reasons:

- to remove the inherent salts in the tile;
- to dissolve the grout residues (water and detergent cannot do this);
- to clean off any general building dust

## (vii) After Grouting:

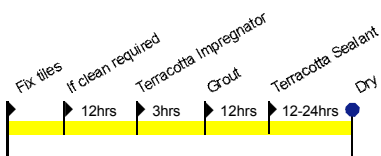
Once the adhesive and grout are cured and before the tiles come into general use, further sealing is required. We recommend three to four thin coats of Lithofin Terracotta Sealant. Each thin coat takes about 30 minutes to dry so, once again, this will save valuable time compared to traditional methods. Apply the Sealant carefully with a clean sponge or roller. Coverage of Terracotta Sealant can vary and depends on the type of terracotta. Please refer to the Terracotta Sealant product details (on page 72) for more information. Once all coats have been applied, vacate the area and leave to dry completely. This will take twelve to twenty-four hours, depending on the ambient room temperature. The Terracotta is now resistant to staining from water-based products, hot oil, grease, foodstuffs and the like. Due to the high level of natural salts in Terracotta, Lithofin Terracotta Sealant is designed to be water permeable for seven to ten days, to allow any water vapour to escape. We therefore recommend only minimal washing for one to two weeks after installation.

## (viii) Maintenance:

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's capabilities and longevity, or detract from the Lithofin Terracotta Sealant's inherent wax-look finish. We recommend one of two Lithofin products for regular maintenance. The first is Lithofin Easy-Care 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.

## 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.*