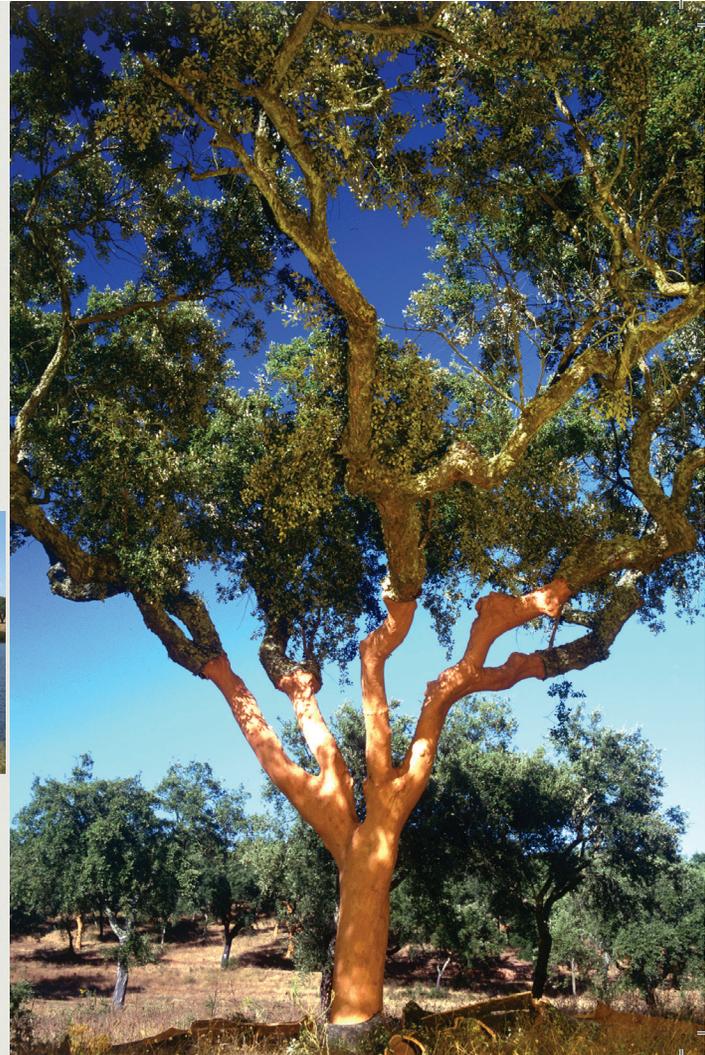


From Bark to Bottle

Pop a Cork and Save the Forests



Cork Forest
Conservation Alliance 

Cork Oak, (*Quercus suber*)

Quercus suber, commonly called the **Cork Oak**, is a medium-sized, evergreen oak tree. It is the primary source of cork for wine bottle stoppers and other uses, such as cork flooring. It is native to southwest Europe and northwest Africa.

The Cork Oak is unique in the world of forestry, as it is the only tree that can have its bark removed, with no harm to the tree. Its bark grows back and is re-harvested every nine years.



The Forests

Cork Oak forests cover over 6.2 million acres in the western part of the Mediterranean basin. They are native to Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

Natural stands of cork oak support the second highest level of forest biodiversity in the world. In North Africa, the cork oak forests are the habitat to the endangered Barbary Deer. In Western Europe, in Portugal and Spain, the cork oak forests are home to endangered species such as the Iberian Eagle and the Iberian Lynx, the most critically threatened feline in the world.

Environmental Impact

The cork forests not only provide a habitat for 13,000 endemic species, they play a vital role in the battle against climate change and desertification. Providing a significant supply of the world's oxygen, they also absorb over 20 million tons of CO₂ each year. Due to the arid climate, low water table and poor soil content, the cork forests are the last line of defense against the very real threat of 7 million acres of new desert.

Cork forests provide a habitat for 13,000 endemic species



Cork forests absorb over 20 million tons of CO₂ each year

Social Importance

Individual family farmers, who for generations have harvested and maintained these forests, own 90% of the cork forests in Europe. Over 100,000 people are directly employed by the cork industry. Cork harvesters are the highest paid agricultural workers in Europe. The cork forests play a significant role in the rich cultural heritage of the western Mediterranean basin.

The More We Use Cork,

Cork Production

The best way to think about harvesting cork bark is that it is similar to shearing sheep.

One of the most common misconceptions about cork harvesting is that the trees are cut down to obtain the bark. **This is completely false.** Skilled craftsmen, using no mechanical tools harvest the bark by hand, causing no harm to the tree. The bark grows back and can be harvested for up to 200 years. *It is illegal, in all seven cork-producing countries to cut down a living Cork Oak.*

A Cork Oak tree can be harvested for up to 200 years



the Healthier the Forests



Manufacturing

The harvesting of cork bark is considered the world's most environmental and sustainable forestry practice. This follows through to the production of cork products. There is zero waste in cork production. Every part of the bark is utilized to produce wine stoppers, flooring, fabric, insulation and a host of other products. The dust created when grinding the cork into granules is compacted and burned to provide up to 60% of the cork factory's energy needs.

TCA, (2,4,6-Trichloranisole)

TCA is a chemical agent (which is harmless to humans) that does have a negative affect on a wine's flavor. Over the last 15 years, the cork industry has spent tens of millions of dollars to help eradicate TCA from affecting wines. Through improved forestry practices, manufacturing and quality control, the incidence of TCA-affected wines has been reduced to 1%.

TCA Facts

- › Wines closed with screw caps and plastic plugs can be affected by TCA.
- › Wineries can have TCA in their walls, floors, barrels, hoses and pallets, which can affect the wine.
- › Winery sanitation and the use of any agent with chorine can introduce TCA into a wine, among many other flaws.

Alternative Closures and Truth About Sustainability

Screwcaps

Let's take a look at the manufacturing process of the screwcap:

- › Aluminum is made from Bauxite. The open pit mining for Bauxite is considered one of the most environmentally hazardous mining practices.
- › It leaves behind a toxic red sludge that poisons underground water and is extremely harmful to humans.
- › Bauxite dust is responsible for a high level of childhood respiratory diseases.
- › The aluminum smelting process leaves behind a toxic chemical which contains heavy metals and cyanide.
- › One aluminum smelter consumes 18 million tons of coal **each day**.
- › The aluminum industry consumes 1% of all the electricity generated in the US.
- › **Screwcaps are not recycled anywhere in the US.**

Plastic Plugs

- › Made from petrochemicals
- › Generate millions of tons of waste each year
- › Have been shown to leach endocrine disruptors into wines sealed with them
- › Are not being recycled anywhere in the US
- › 96% of all consumers surveyed say the plastic plug is their least favorite closure



Alternative closures are **not sustainably sourced**. They are not biodegradable. They are not produced from renewable materials and are **not being recycled**.



Closing a bottle of wine with a screwcap or plastic plug is like packaging a vegan burger in a leather box.



Fact: Just because something can be recycled does not mean it is being recycled.

What You Can Do

- › **Purchase only wines with natural cork.**
- › **Ask your waiters and wine store stewards to recommend wines sealed with natural cork.**
- › **Spread the word; the more we use cork the healthier the forests.**



*CFCA in Special Consultative status with the United Nations
Economic and Social Council since 2013.*

Mission Statement

The Cork Forest Conservation Alliance campaigns globally for the protection and preservation of the Mediterranean cork forests, its inhabitants and biodiversity, through education, direct action, and partnerships with communities, businesses and governments. We believe that teaching and promoting sustainability is the best way to systematically approach and solve the many complex environmental challenges facing society today.

Leading the Cork Recycling Movement

Along with our forest conservation and educational initiatives, the CFCA has developed a natural cork-recycling program, Cork ReHarvest. With hundreds of collection centers in the US, Canada and the EU, this program helps to collect and recycle some of the billions of natural corks that are produced each year. Of additional importance to this program, is the goal of educating the public about the vital importance of preserving and protecting the Mediterranean cork forests. Cork collection boxes are placed in grocery stores, wine and bottle shops, and winery tasting rooms. We also partner with the Food and Beverage and Hospitality industries to collect cork at restaurants, hotels, wine bars, convention and performing arts centers.

To learn more about our forest conservation efforts and our recycling program please visit:

www.corkforest.org

