

A Report on Vegetable Tanning

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BRIEF REPORT

Following Emil Fischer's great contribution to an understanding of vegetable tannins in the early 1900s, the work of the following half-century only illustrated the intricacy of the difficulties they offered. There was a broad divide between condensed or non-hydrolysable and hydrolysable tannins. But much else was hazy and chaotic. Bate-Smith and Swain pioneered whole new approaches to these drugs in the 1950s. They lifted the veil on the botanical characteristics of these compounds for the first time, revealing the vast vistas that lied beyond. It was to pave the way for significant advances in the knowledge of their chemistry and biology over the next fifty years. Vegetable tanning is a centuries-old technique that has been passed down from father to son at tanneries for over 200 years, employing both ancient methods and cutting-edge technology. You can easily see the skill that has gone into making veggie tanned items.

The transformation of raw skins into a long-lasting substance takes place slowly in wooden drums while maintaining environmental sensitivity. It's a remarkable process that relies on natural tannins, contemporary technology and gear, and, most importantly, the passage of time.

- Vegetable tanning is the most traditional, most identifiable, the only process capable of giving leather distinctive features, the most natural, and the most environmentally friendly of the numerous tanning procedures. In the product, it is able to combine comfort and appearance, fashion and tradition, originality and adaptability.
- In Europe, high-quality vegetable tanning is vanishing, with the exception of Italy, where Consortium is the world's best in tradition, handicraft, and fashion innovation.
- The Genuine Italian Vegetable-Tanned Leather Consortium supports natural vegetable tanning and the Italian legacy of vegetable tanning.
- Consortium Vero Cuoio is the global spokesperson for the "Cuoio di Toscana" brand, with the goal of preserving and developing the leather sole's excellence. The heart and soul of the shoes we adore.

Vegetable extracts

Raw materials used for vegetable tanning are natural tannins, available in liquid or powder form, obtained from a different part of plants including woods, barks, fruits, fruit pods, and leaves. The most common tannins are obtained from:

- Chestnut wood (*Castanea sativa*)
- Quebracho wood (*Schinopsis lorentzii*)
- Tara pods (*Caesalpinia spinosa*)
- Catechu (*Acacia catechu*)
- Chinese gallnut (*Rhustaphina semialata*)
- Turkish gallnut (*Quercus infectoria*)
- Gambier (*Uncaria gambir*)
- Myrobalan (*Terminalia chebula*)
- Oak wood (*Quercus* sp)
- Sumac (*Rhustaphina coriaria*)
- Valonia Oak (*Quercus macrolepis*)

Advantages of vegetable tanning

- Vegetable tanning is environmentally friendly; meaning any leather products that have been vegetable tanned can be recycled.
- Vegetable tanning is an age old tradition, so most tanneries have very skilled craftsmen producing and dyeing the leather.
- Due to the natural tannins used, vegetable tanned products are unique and have their own life, they are not the same for their entire life, but they change, continuously, for the better.
- The colors that vegetable tanning produces are rich and warm tones that look completely natural.
- Vegetable tanned leathers are more valuable and thus sold at a higher average price compared to chrome tanned leathers.

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Disadvantages of vegetable tanning

- The average process time of vegetable tanning is quite similar to chrome tanned leather but it can take up to 60 days to produce sole leather.
- It can stain easily in the presence of iron.
- Products that have been vegetable tanned are more expensive. They require much more skill to tan the hides, this means they are of better quality.
- The colors you can produce from vegetable tanning are limited.
- Direct heat can cause vegetable tanned products to shrink or crack.