

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Planning a Deck? Know the Basics Before You Start

(NAPSA)—Building a deck is one of the most popular home improvement projects because it provides a great place for outdoor relaxation and family entertainment, while adding value and aesthetic appeal to a home.

But as a homeowner, you should avoid having your deck become a virtual to-do list of care and maintenance.

“Proper planning and use of the right materials are critical to building a deck,” said Stu Kemper, president of TimberTech Limited, manufacturer of TimberTech Engineered Decking Systems™. “If you don’t consider your deck’s surrounding landscape and aren’t aware of low-maintenance substrate choices, you may end up spending more time laboring over the deck than enjoying it.”

Kemper suggests these tips to help you make the most of your investment.

Scouting the area—Assess how your family will use the deck, as well as the area where you plan to build. Determine how much space you’ll need and consider when the deck will be used most. Next, decide on the amount of sun or shade you desire—generally, the southwest corner of the house offers the best combination. Make sure outlets and water lines accommodate any amenities you plan for the deck.

Other fixed conditions, such as the landscape of the ground beneath the deck, can affect the materials needed, as well as the complexity of the project. After evaluating the area, consult a professional contractor and make sure your plans will work. Finally, check local building codes to determine what guidelines must be followed.

Divide and conquer—You may want to divide a large deck project into small, manageable projects so that the experience isn’t overwhelming or too costly. Additions can be made each year until the deck is complete.

Selecting deck material—The deck material is just as important as the deck design itself. A deck should last for several years with little or no need for time-consuming and costly maintenance.

Wood composite products such as TimberTech®, made from a com-



Wood composite products let homeowners enjoy their decks rather than laboring over them.

bination of recycled wood and virgin polymers, look like wood and stand up to harsh conditions over time, with little required maintenance. Unlike wood, these products do not split, splinter, rot, decay or warp, and they require no painting or sealing.

Most wood composite products resist moisture and wood-boring insects while providing superior slip resistance. Only TimberTech, however, offers a Tongue-and-Groove Plank to create a fastener-free surface that prevents nail popping, a common problem with wood decks.

Hangers and fasteners—A variety of joist hangers, connectors and fasteners is available to make decks sturdy and stable. Make sure your installer doesn’t skimp on hardware; it’s the “glue” that holds your investment together.

From start to finish—Choose a finish that will complement your home’s exterior. Remember, wood deck materials must be stained completely on all sides before construction. Wood composite products, on the other hand, eliminate the need for staining altogether. A TimberTech deck will weather to a natural driftwood gray color (or light brown color in hot, dry climates), but it can be painted or stained if you wish.

The comforts of home—Popular deck additions include shade shelters, privacy screens, trellises, built-in benches and planters. Enhancements are limited only to your imagination (and budget).

For more information about building a unique and beautiful deck or choosing low-maintenance decking materials, contact TimberTech Limited at 1-800-307-7780 or visit the Web site at www.TimberTech.com.