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Advantages of composite decking

Living the Country Life Radio Program with Betsy Freese

Low-maintenance decks

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Radio interview source: *Craig Sherrett, marketing director, Fiber Composites, LLC*

We live in an old farmhouse that was built long before decks were a popular addition. If we decide to build one, it will have to be low maintenance. There are not enough hours in the day for us to keep up with it.

Composite decking has been around for a decade as a "build-it-and-forget-about-it" solution. It's a 50-50 mixture of recycled plastics and wood. Craig Sherrett works with a company that makes the product.

"The recycled wood comes from the furniture industry and is primarily maple wood flour," Sherrett says. "Wood flour is obviously another name for sawdust. On the other side, the 50% of the recycled plastic all comes from high-density polyethylene -- plastic that's used in yogurt cups, plastic plates and that type of thing."

Composite decking doesn't require as much upkeep as wood. It's not totally maintenance-free though -- you do have to hose it off every once in awhile. But it resists weathering, twisting and rotting, and never has to be stained or sealed. The stability comes from UV stabilizers and antioxidants infused in the boards.

Looks like wood

"The wood can be faded by the sun and create some color discrepancies," Sherrett says. "So the UV stabilizers will take the pigments in the plastic and protect the wood from degrading its color from the sunlight. The antioxidants prevent the plastic from creating what they call micro-fissures, or micro-cracks."

Composite decking is available in solid colors, and some manufacturers have even created the look of realistic wood grain - without the splinters in your bare feet. New hidden fastener systems eliminate the pain of stubbing your toe on a popped-up screw.

Be prepared to dig a little deeper in the pocketbook, as this type of decking is usually twice as expensive as wood. However, the money and time saved on maintenance might make it worth the cost in the long run.

Learn more:

[Durable decking](#): Learn about the pros and cons of composite and wood decks.



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[Synthetic decking reveals real benefits](#): See how beautiful and functional composite decking can be with this slideshow.

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