

Natural Weathering vs. Finishing Decking



Whether or not to allow your naturally durable hardwood decking to weather naturally is both an aesthetic and a maintenance decision.

It is recommended that you apply one coat of a penetrating oil-based finish on all sides of your wood decking. This will slow down the wood's acclimation process upon initial installation.

If you allow your deck to weather, UV exposure will break down the oil finish, and your deck will turn silver-grey over time. The only maintenance that will be required is the occasional cleaning to remove dirt and mildew.

It is important to note that mold grows on everything, even glass. If dirt or pollen is allowed to develop on any surface, it provides a food source for mold spores to grow.

Lack of maintenance is one of the misperceptions associated with composite decking. All decks will require some level of cleaning and maintenance.

Regular Deck Marine Oil applications are required to maintain a wood deck's natural color. The best practice is to clean your deck with a Deck Cleaner, allow your deck to dry thoroughly, and wipe on/wipe off a fresh coat of Deck Marine Oil every spring and every fall.



If the deck has been allowed to weather grey, after cleaning, you will need to apply a Wood Brightener to remove the grey or other stains before reapplying with new oil.

When applying oil finishes, always remember that less is more. You want to wipe off all excess oil, just like you would when polishing furniture. Excess oil will remain sticky, collect dust and pollen, and provide food for mold spores to grow. Over-application of oil does not extend the service life of the finish.

While there are water-based finishes offered for decking, penetrating oil is preferable. It is important to note that water-based finishes can be applied over oil, but oil can never be applied over water-based finishes.

The benefit of wood decking over composite is that it can always be returned to its original natural color. Stains will dissipate over time or can be removed by cleaning or sanding. And unlike composites, you don't have to worry about permanent fading, the discontinuation of colors, or the associated difficulty of matching your original deck with replacement boards or matching the deck boards when adding on to your deck.

In the end, it is primarily an aesthetic consideration. Only natural wood decking lets you choose either option anytime during the deck's life.

Remember to follow the guidelines and recommendations provided by the wood manufacturer and the specific cleaning product manufacturers.

