



THINKING OF A DECK? *Think ahead.*

Most deck planning starts with the usual photo-op in mind, including hammocks, umbrella drinks, and giant friend-filled fiestas. Yet rarely do such plans budget for the five-year experience. Namely, keeping up with the restaining and the water sealing. Dealing with leftover blotches from sunscreen spatters and red wine spills. And what about a summer's worth of fade marks where the table and doormat used to be?

When it comes to building a deck, it's worth thinking long-term. And that's where this cheat sheet comes in. While some costs are simple (a 35-dollar board is a 35-dollar board), others cost you things more precious...like a lazy lunch with the kids, time with the paper and straight-up patience.

Herewith, we cover the five decision points to help you choose what's right for you, your backyard and your budget. (Not to mention your weekends.)



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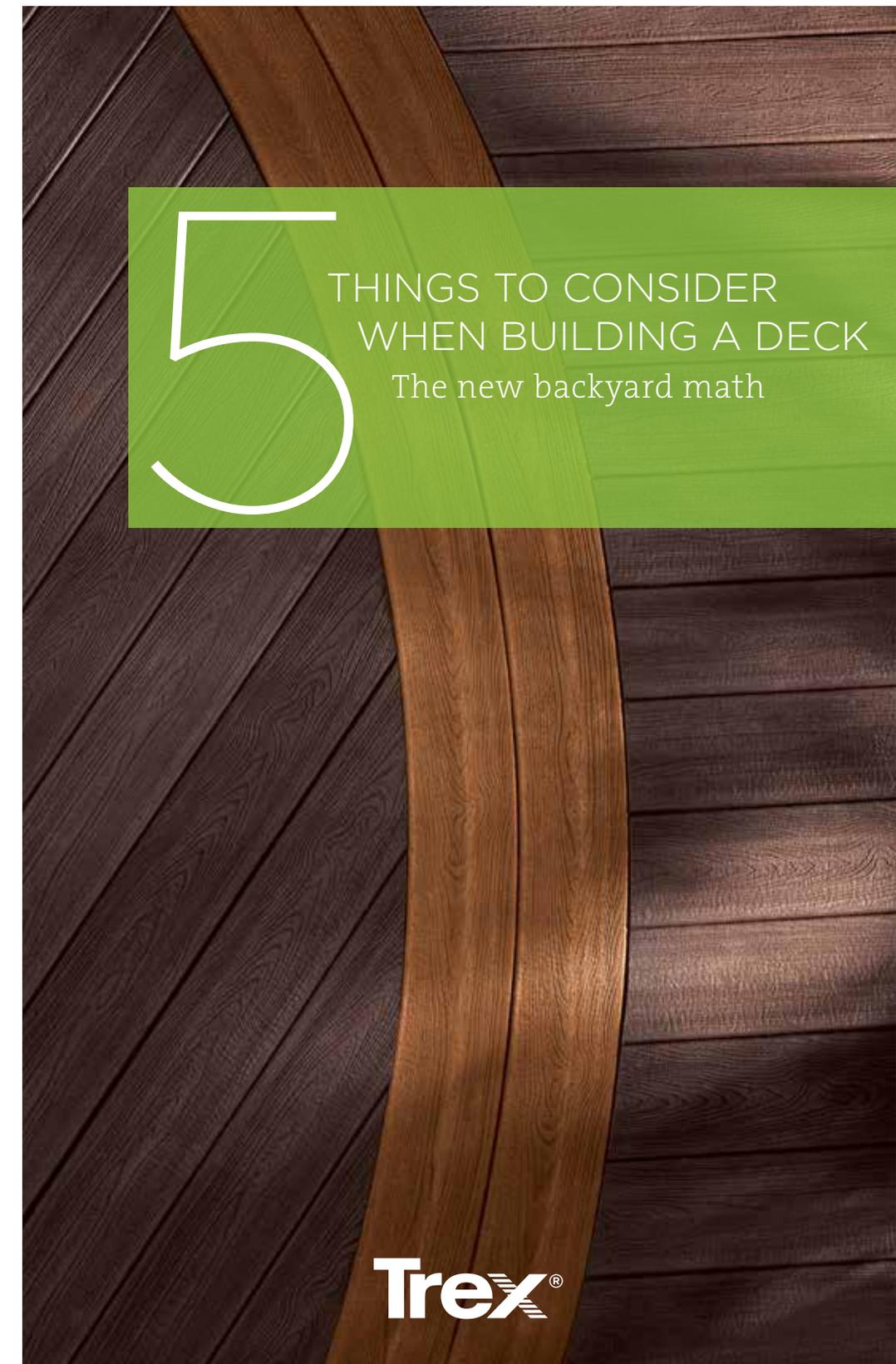
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THINGS TO CONSIDER
WHEN BUILDING A DECK
The new backyard math

Trex®

1 MATERIAL What's it made of?

CAPPED COMPOSITE DECKING

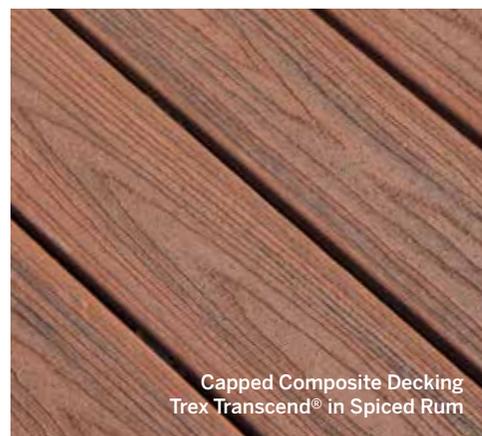
The ultimate in backyard decking, capped composite is wrapped in a tough-as-nails finish that keeps the beauty in and the work out.

PROS

- + soap-and-water maintenance
- + fade, stain, scratch and mold resistant
- + natural wood-grain finish and rich color
- + earth friendly
- + fade and stain warranties

CONS

- often costlier board-for-board



Capped Composite Decking
Trex Transcend® in Spiced Rum

PVC (VINYL) DECKING

All plastic material with no organic content makes it easy to maintain.

PROS

- + fade, stain, scratch and mold resistant
- + low maintenance
- + finished look without painting

CONS

- tends to squeak and get chalky
- not earth friendly
- costlier board-for-board



PVC (Vinyl) Decking

EARLY-GENERATION COMPOSITE DECKING

Your original wood-alternative board. Part wood, part plastic, all easygoing.

PROS

- + won't rot or splinter
- + a great, durable value
- + earth friendly

CONS

- can fade and stain
- requires periodic cleaning with deck wash
- susceptible to scratches



Early-Generation Composite Decking

WOOD DECKING

For the purist, a wood deck is real and natural, with a pleasing heft.

PROS

- + traditional, one-with-nature feel
- + affordable board-for-board
- + easy to work with, easy to source

CONS

- rots, splits, swells, twists, fades
- contributes to deforestation
- one word: splinters
- pressure-treating chemicals are toxic
- requires painting, staining or sealing



Wood Decking

2 LABOR

How hard is installation?

The cost of building a deck can be 20-50% labor, so it's important to consider whether or not this is a DIY project or one best left to the pros.

Some of the hidden costs may surprise you, however. For instance, composites are as easy to handle as wood and usually require no special tools, while PVC is more difficult to customize.

3 MAINTENANCE

How much upkeep are we talking?

Beyond the initial premium cost of composite decking, the cost of maintaining, replacing and simply hating the mess other products can turn into is worth a run through the calculator. Often, in five to 10 years time, the relative costs (think power-washing, water seal, stain, weekend-filling chores) even out.

4 BEAUTY

Lots of design options?

Some materials enable customizable design options—everything from curves to multiple colors and wood-grain patterns—while others are more limited in scope. When choosing a material for your project, it's helpful to keep your priorities in mind: are you looking for great design options, the best value, or maybe a product that offers a balance of both?

5 R.O.I.

What's it worth when I move?

Some products add more value and joy to a home than others. The more carefree and eco-friendly the deck, the more attractive it is to potential home buyers...that is, if you can ever dream of moving.

