

EYE FOR DESIGN

Approaches to creating great-looking decks

Edge Detail for Capped Composite Decking

by Robert Shaw



If you install capped composite decking, you know how unsightly the ends of the boards are compared with the capped tops, bottoms, and edges. One way to hide the ends is to install a border around the perimeter of the deck. While that can add visual interest to solid-color decking boards, it requires considerable blocking and adds to the project time line and overall cost. And when used with multichromatic decking boards, borders are almost a distraction.

An alternative is to finish the decking with a $\frac{3}{8}$ - to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide trim detail. We cut our trim pieces from composite deck boards that have square, non-grooved edges and then glue the trim to the ends of the decking and nail or screw it in place. This detail not only looks attractive, but is easier, faster, and less expensive to make and install than a border.

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Capped composite decking is often finished with a picture-framed border (photo, top right) so that the ends of the boards aren't visible. A faster and less-expensive alternative is to conceal the ends with an applied trim detail (photos, top left and bottom right). The trim is ripped from non-grooved decking and screwed or nailed in place. See more photos on page 28.



Deck boards are installed long and then cut in place along a straight line so the trim will lie flat once it's attached. A track saw, like the Festool TS55REQ shown above, is ideal for the job.



The trim can be cut on a table saw, but using a circular saw equipped with an edge guide is probably easier. The advantages to using a cordless circular saw are that it's lightweight and it has enough power for this cut. A 20-foot length of square-edged Fiberon Horizon decking yields 40 linear feet of $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch-wide edge trim; the author sometimes uses a different width, depending on the brand of decking he's working with.



Loctite Power Grab adhesive is spread onto the back of the trim prior to installation. Power Grab dries clear, so if any squeeze-out is missed during cleanup, it's usually unnoticeable.



Eighteen-gauge stainless steel finish nails hold the trim in place until the glue dries. One nail per deck board is more than enough. ❖