

## Demo-Dek Demolition Tool

Demo-Dek  
GreenTek Tools  
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Web price: \$150

by Greg DiBernardo

When you build decks for a living, part of your workload is tearing off old decks to make room for the new ones you're building for your clients. Demolition is not particularly glamorous or rewarding, but it's an essential part of the job, and the faster we can be done with it, the better. That's why over the years we've tested just about every available deck demolition tool, such as the Deck Demon (thedeckdemon.com), the Gutster (thegutster.com), and the Duck-bill Deck Wrecker (deckwrecker.com). They are all capable tools that excel at quickly removing boards from joists (see "A Deck Builder's Tool Kit," Mar/Apr 2013; and "Sturdy Demolition Tool," Jul/Aug 2013), but the newest tool we've tested, the Demo-Dek, might just be the quickest of the lot.

The Demo-Dek is a hybrid design consisting of an alloy steel 5140 jaw and an ultra-durable laminated bamboo handle. While other deck-board removal tools use the underlying deck joist for prying leverage, the Demo-Dek uses the deck board itself. I was skeptical when I first heard the claims of inventor Ben Weinreich, who is also a licensed contractor in Maryland, but putting it into action made me a believer—quickly.

The U-shaped jaw of the standard Demo-Dek, which is the one we tested, is fixed and can accommodate standard 5/4 and 2-by decking. The company



The Demo-Dek's sturdy steel jaw is sized to fit standard decking (above). The tool allows the user to stand on the existing decking (top), and doesn't rely on a joist for leverage.

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## TOOL KIT

recently introduced a contractor-series Demo-Dek with an adjustable jaw made of higher-strength steel, which we haven't tested. According to Weinreich, its ability to closely match deck-board thicknesses from 1 1/8 inches to a full 2 inches improves the lifting efficiency of the tool by 10% to 15%. But we found that the standard tool was plenty fast, especially since the Demo-Dek can be used at any point on the decking—we didn't have to locate the head of the tool over a joist as with most other decking removal tools we've tried. This feature makes an even bigger difference on decks with doubled joists or wider framing members that can hamper those tools—to the point of making them useless—that rely on a joist for leverage.

The Demo-Dek generates a large amount of prying torque. We used the tool on both nailed and screwed pressure-treated 5/4 and 2-by decking, and it didn't slow down a bit. To prevent soft or rotted boards from splitting lengthwise between the fasteners, we found that it was cleaner to work down the length of the board and pry incrementally, even though the tool provided so much torque that we were tempted to break the board free in one big pull. This approach was required more often on 5/4 boards than on 2-bys.

In addition to the power the Demo-Dek provides, we liked the way the tool can capture a deck board in its jaw. This allowed us to hold onto a removed board and move it around, on or off the deck. Other tools break the board free, but then the user has to bend down to grab the board or kick it to move it out of the way. Being able to swing the removed board to wherever it made sense and flick it out of the jaw without missing a beat was a huge time-saver. And for any fasteners left behind, the Demo-Dek has a built-in nail puller.

The tool also proved to be plenty tough. We worked it extremely hard, side-loading it and putting lateral torque



**Once a board has been pulled from the joists, the tool can be used to quickly pick it up and move it out of the way.**

on it by twisting it in a way that it was probably not intended to be used—and it has held up well. Weinreich says that when he load-tests his handles, they don't break suddenly when pushed to failure (at about 900 pounds); instead, the fibers start to slowly tear at the top bolt hole where the jaw is fastened to the handle. Even if a user were able to generate enough force to damage the handle, it would become useless long before it became dangerous.

If you or your company removes a lot of decking, this is the right tool for the job. Time is money, and the Demo-Dek will definitely save time. ❖

*Greg DiBernardo owns Bergen Decks in Waldwick, N.J.*