



# YACHT TIPS

## Teak Decking Care

### How to look after your teak decking

Guidance on how wash and care for teak decks so that they last longer

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### INFORMATION ON TEAK DECK MAINTENANCE

Quality teak decking can be serviceable for two to three decades when properly maintained however it can be ruined in one year. I often come across modern decorative teak decking on modern production craft which is only 6mm thick planking needing which is need of replacement after only four to five years of service due to poor maintenance.

**REMEMBER TEAK DECKING SHOULD BE A SILVER GREY IN COLOUR NOT BROWN OR PINK.**

Proper maintenance on teak decking has been discussed on the Internet many times, but as in other subjects there are opinions that may guide you into the wrong direction and the remarks made below are the result of having surveyed many hundreds of vessels fitted with teak decks using all methods of maintenance.

The first thing to remember is that teak is actually a very sensitive natural material. It is used on decks because of its excellent non weathering properties. But like all woods natural growing generates softer and harder sections in trees (year rings, also called grain in lumber). A softer grain on teak deck planking of course wears away easier and faster than the harder one. This is why you should **NEVER SCRUB DECKS WITH A HARD BRISTLE BRUSH**, and absolutely never brush long the grain, as this will eat out the softer wood very quickly.

The best way to clean your teak decking is to rinse the decks weekly with clean salt water, this leaves a film of salt crystals on the surface that stops the decking from drying out and also acts as a preventative to algae growth. Teak like all wood expands when wet and shrinks when dry so rinsing a teak deck as often as possible keeps the planking in compression with the caulking preventing it being torn away from the plank sides.

**DO NOT SPRAY TEAK DECKING WITH A PRESSURE WASHER** as this will remove the softer grain and encourage accelerated wear.

If washing is needed, use green vegetable oil soap with a cotton mop or soft brush. If you have to scrub, do it across the grain but don't scrub too much as the top layer of the wood cells are removed with the dirt. Remember that what is washed away is gone forever and will not come back.

**AVOID ALL CHEMICAL TEAK CLEANERS OR COLOUR RESTORES.** Whilst these will make cleaning easy initially, they do so by removing the top layers of the wood cells. In addition to this the chemicals remove the teaks natural oils making it less resistant to weathering which in turn means having to clean it more often and in consequence more loss of the woods surface.

**DON'T OIL TEAK DECKING** as the oil will also hold dirt and oily dirt doesn't wash off, but stays on teak instead making it dark in colour.

If your decks are screwed down and the screw holes plugged, then it is very important to replace any missing plugs as soon as they are noticed. Don't leave it until the winter, as water will penetrate down the screw hole into the deck below, which if it is of a cored construction will slowly destroy the decks rigidity and strength.

***TIP:- Accelerated wear does take place on planking that is washed out and ridged so keeping your decks as flat and as smooth as possible with good washing techniques is essential. If the decks are already ridged then lightly sanding them back smooth and caring for them properly after this will make them last longer then leaving them ridged however sanding will remove some wood cells and this should not be attempted on very thin planking. Please remember commercial cleaners are only after short-term cosmetic results and are not concerned for the teak decks longevity and in a lot of cases will be damaging the decking by their cleaning methods. It is therefore important to give them clear instruction on how you want the decks cleaned.***