

The “greener” deck: How a new product is revolutionizing the decking industry

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Until recently, many homeowners installed decks and patios without giving a second thought to the impact it might have on the environment. Now that everything from cars to cleaning products are touting their shades of “green,” it’s changed the way we all look at virtually everything we do. And let’s face it; building a traditional lumber deck isn’t exactly friendly to Mother Nature mainly due to the massive amount of wood that is required.

Called SilcaSystem™, a new line of products is quickly revolutionizing the decking industry not only by minimizing the amount of wood required to build a deck, but also by providing alternative surface materials which mimic the natural look of stone or tile. The three components of the SilcaSystem are:

- SilcaGrate™:** a super-strong substructure that supports the weight of stone, brick, tile, or pavers on elevated and non-elevated surfaces.
- SilcaStone™:** a lightweight eco-friendly paver made of recycled plastics and polymers which looks like stone.
- SilcaTile™:** a lightweight eco-friendly 12”x12” tile made of 100% recycled plastics.

The beauty of SilcaSystem is that these components work together or alone, depending upon the application.

The foundation is formed with SilcaGrate which is screwed directly into the floor joists to provide a sturdy base for the surface materials. Made of engineered polymer, SilcaGrate boasts a hexagonal matrix which offers support every two inches in all directions, allowing for virtually any surface material including stone, brick, pavers, tile, SilcaStone, or SilcaTile. Not only do these surface materials provide a more opulent appearance than traditional lumber while also reducing the amount of lumber needed, but the SilcaGrate substructure provides substantially more muscle than lumber pieces which traditionally span 16 to 24” between joists and only offer bi-lateral support. In fact, in a test area of less than seven square inches (just one single hexagon) loaded with more than 700 pounds, the deflection was less than 3/8”, which exceeds current building code standards by a factor of more than 6 times. It’s easily cut to form and simple to install with only 6 screws, making it accessible to any contractor, landscaper, or DIY homeowner.

For the surface material, the homeowner gets to choose traditional stone, brick, pavers, tile, or slate, or engineered products such as SilcaStone or SilcaTile. Both SilcaStone and SilcaTile are made of varying percentages of recycled plastic and polymer materials. Not only are they made of recycled materials, but they are also recyclable. They are specially designed to have a remarkably natural look which provides the luxurious look of stone or tile. And as added benefits, they are more weather-tolerant than natural materials, easier to install, and provide a more even surface which is easier to walk on.

When it comes to a “greener” deck, maybe the color is the shade of stone, brick, pavers, or tile.

For more information about SilcaSystem products, visit www.SilcaSystem.com.