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Can I get 'maintenance free' decking?

Deck board maintenance is something that we all try to ignore. However, it is important to consider when it comes to outside surfaces. We frequently hear and see companies promoting 'maintenance-free' decking (most commonly composite and plastic deck board providers). This is an enticing statement. Unfortunately, it is not true. There is no such thing as maintenance-free decking, just like there is no such thing as a maintenance-free car.

Any product, whether it is timber, composite, plastic, porcelain, or just plain concrete slabs, will all be subjected to falling leaves, moss, muddy dog paws, and general dirt created by footwear, especially during the Autumn and Winter months. If this surface is not cleaned once or twice a year, then a build-up of dirt will make the surface slippery especially when wet, regardless of what material this residue sits on.

Manufactured products like composites, plastics, and porcelain tiles in most cases, will need cleaning with a bowl of washing up liquid and a broom to loosen the dirt. This can then be carefully jet-washed off. You can also use the same technique with timber, or, if the dirt is too ingrained into the pores of the timber, you can spray on an appropriate deck cleaner which involves a lot less effort. This will lift the dirt and remove any grey surface oxidation before thoroughly jet-washing off.

After this, you can oil the timber to enhance its original colour. Also adding a degree of protection from whatever the weather throws at it. This is a personal choice and certainly is not essential for the durability of the timber. However, don't get sold on the idea that you can have a deck built with good quality deck board that doesn't need looking after for several years. When protecting your decking from frosty and snowy weather, it is recommended to sprinkle fine salt in the places most walked upon. We advise not to use grit, sand, or rock salt as this can scratch and mark the boards and will create more mess for you to clean!

So, in short, the answer to the commonly asked question: "Can I have maintenance-free decking?" is "No".

Key Takeaways

- No decking is maintenance-free
- Make sure you apply the correct coatings and protective layers to your deck
- A simple bowl of washing up liquid and a broom will do the trick for most decks!