

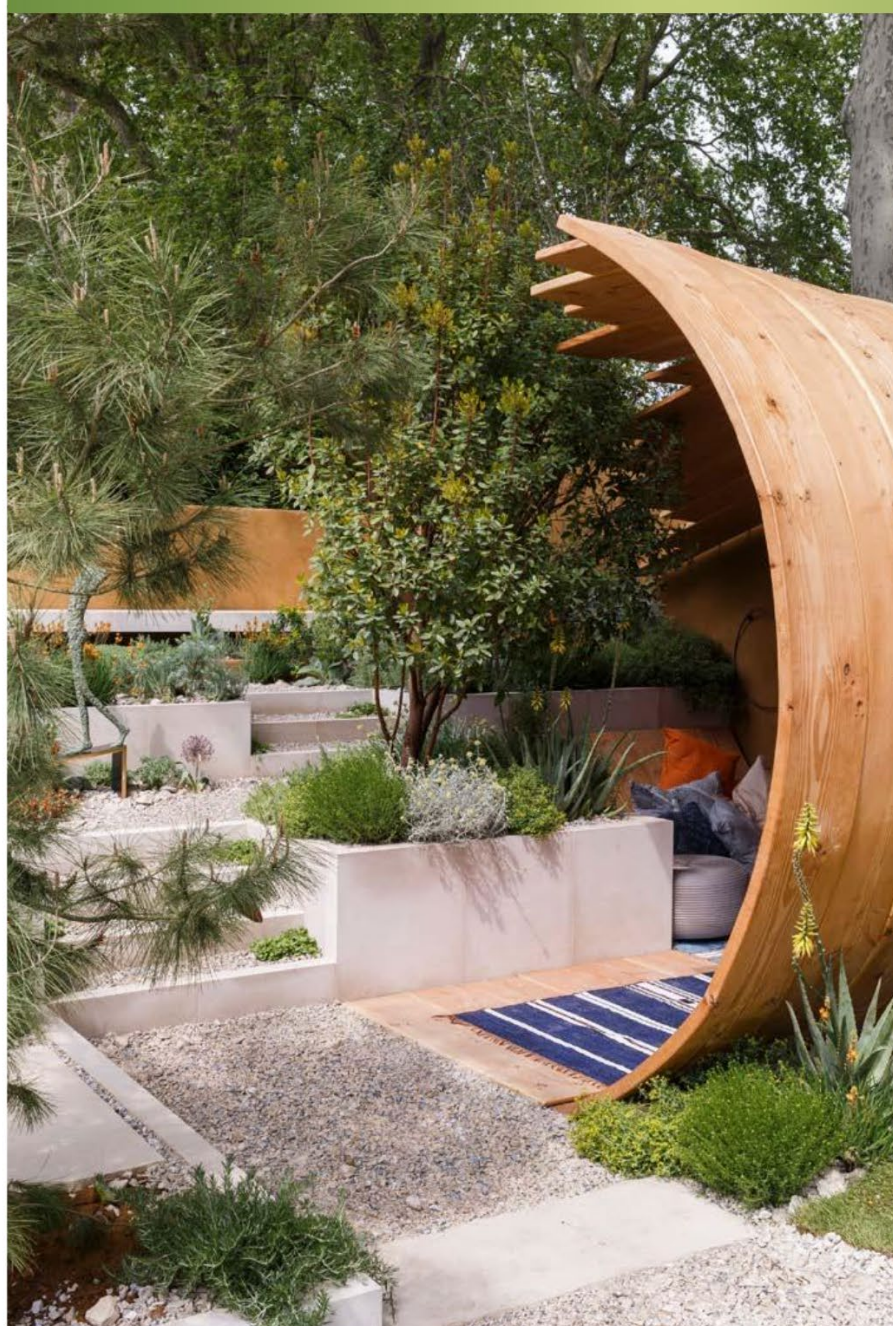
LANDSCAPE & URBAN DESIGN

48

Mar/Apr 2021

Price £3⁹⁵

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THREE DECK UPGRADES THAT OPTIMIZE PROJECT POTENTIAL, PERFORMANCE AND PROFITS

BY: SIMON THOMAS, TREXPRO AND OWNER OF SIMON THOMAS DECK & DESIGN



2021 should be declared “the year of the garden!” As Brits continue to spend more time at home, space is at a premium, inspiring homeowners to look outside for an escape and some extra elbow room. If your business is anything like mine, your project calendar is likely filling up for the season, if not already booked out. Since quantity of jobs should not be an issue this year, why not focus on quality and making the most of the projects you have lined up? With homeowners more willing than ever to invest in their outdoor spaces, be sure to optimize opportunities to sell them simple upgrades that will add function and value to their decks without adding a lot of time or cost. Here are three easy and cost-effective add-ons that I suggest to all of my clients:

1. Deck Flashing Tape

Today’s homeowners have access to high-performance garden decking warrantied to last for decades. But research* has shown that most decking substructures begin to show signs of decay within the first 8-10 years. This is because the majority of substructures are built using timber, which is susceptible to damage from moisture and exposure to outdoor elements.

Easily one of wood’s worst enemies, moisture contributes to mould growth and can accelerate structural deterioration. This is particularly common in the U.K. given our perennially damp and rainy climate. When joists and bearers are exposed, water can seep into screw

holes and sit on the wood causing it to rot and the screws to rust. Additionally, the natural expansion and contraction of wood due to seasonal freezing and thawing can cause beams to split and weaken over time, posing serious safety concerns.

Deck flashing tape is a simple and inexpensive way to protect wood from the damaging effects of weather and time. Designed to shield the tops of timber joists, bearers and ledger boards from water damage, it also acts as a moisture barrier between wood and galvanized metal to help deck screws and fasteners hold longer and stronger for enhanced structural integrity.

*Based on a survey of 100+ builders conducted by Dri-Deck Enterprises (now IBC, LLC)



to fully optimize a deck project is by installing an under-deck drainage system. When protected from the elements, the often overlooked area beneath an elevated deck can become a perfect spot for an al fresco conference call, mid-day playtime for at-home students or an open-air yoga session.

Using a network of troughs and downspouts, an under-deck drainage system captures and diverts water away from a deck, not only preserving the studwork but also making the area under the deck useable for storage or as additional living space. Once protected, that space can be used for stowing lawn and garden equipment, pool supplies, bicycles and boats, or outfitted with furnishings, lighting fixtures, ceiling fans and entertainment components to serve as an outdoor room.

There are two main types of drainage systems - those that install above or below the joists of the substructure. For optimal protection and aesthetics, I prefer an "above-the-joist" system, such as Trex® RainEscape®. The main advantage to this type of system is that it protects the entire foundation and the area beneath the deck. It also allows homeowners to put any kind of decorative ceiling or soffit on the underside of the joists, making it a good option for customers who want a completely finished look.



My go-to product is Trex® Protect™ Joist and Bearer Tape. I use it on every deck I build - no matter the size, design or decking material I use - because I want my work to last. It's a self-adhesive butyl tape engineered specifically for use on decks. It works on both horizontal and vertical surfaces and is applied as a "cap" (vs. wrapping) to allow the timber to breathe. The peel-and-stick tape lies directly on the boards and requires minimal cuts and little overlap making application a breeze.

Furthermore, the butyl adhesive is super sticky, yet pliable, which

allows it to create a tight seal around fasteners to prevent water from infiltrating screw holes. It doesn't dry out or curl up like other construction tapes and performs extremely well in a wide range of temperatures. Trex Protect tape also features a non-skid surface, making it easy and safe to walk across during construction.

2. An Under-Deck Drainage System

As our homes have become offices, classrooms, fitness facilities - you name it - space has become a precious commodity. One easy way





Trex RainEscape is easy and efficient to install - whether during a new deck build or when replacing existing deck boards. The entire system includes just five SKUs - a 40cm and 30cm drainage trough sheet, a downspout,

butyl waterproof caulk and butyl waterproof tape. Additionally, only three tools - scissors or a utility knife, a staple gun hammer and a caulk gun - are needed for installation. Each trough is clearly labeled with staple markers to

expedite the process, which takes no more than a few hours to complete. And, the system is backed by a 20-year warranty from Trex® - the world's #1 decking brand.



3. Deck Lighting

Another “bright” idea for adding value to a deck project is with lighting. Dimmable LED lights incorporated into railing post caps and stair risers can increase safety

while also enhancing ambiance and extending the time that homeowners can spend enjoying their outdoor space. And don’t forget to illuminate the space beneath the deck with soffit lights.

The makers of Trex RainEscape offer plug-and-play lighting components that integrate seamlessly with the drainage system and with other Trex Outdoor Lighting components.



While these add-ons may seem minor, they can have a major impact on customer satisfaction and your bottom line - especially during a season as busy as this one promises to be.

For more information about the products mentioned in this article, visit TrexProtect.com/uk and TrexRainEscape.com