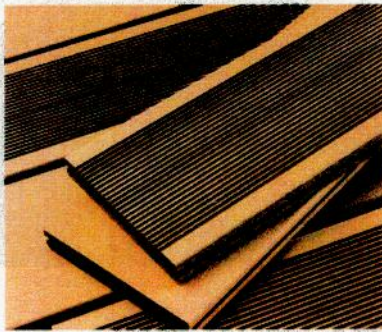


By Jacqueline Simoneau

*Surfacing choices for decks include pressure-treated wood of course, but there are also some new materials designed for easy installation and maintenance. Here's an overview.*

## OF DECKS

# AND PATIOS



### Bamboo

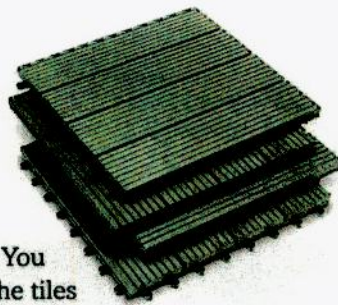
Bamboo planks are generally made of recycled material: 30-percent bamboo fibre and 70-percent recycled plastic. They're available in a smooth or grooved (non-slip) finish, reminiscent of natural wood. Installation is simple, done with special clips.

**Pros** Very resistant, especially to rot and mould; durable and stable; minimum maintenance; won't split or warp.

**Cons** Sold only in 8-foot planks; limited colour choice.

### Interlocking tiles

They're made of a wood-plastic composite with a slat-like appearance on top, and can be snapped together by a simple downward-pressure motion. You can also choose to arrange the tiles checkerboard-style for a modern, dynamic look. Interlocking tiles suit both concrete and wooden surfaces.

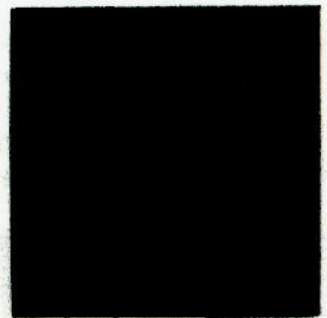


**Pros** Quick, easy installation; minimum maintenance; weather resistant; won't split, crack or warp; gives new life to worn-out, damaged floors; reusable (can be removed and used elsewhere).

**Cons** Can be slippery when wet; sometimes discolours slightly in sunlight.

### Recycled-rubber tiles

They're made from recycled tires and resemble certain kinds of paving stone. They can be installed, using fasteners, directly over an existing covering whether concrete or wood.



**Pros** Easy installation; minimum maintenance; weather resistant; won't discolour, warp, split, crack or scale.

**Cons** Fabricated in dark colours. (Darker hues absorb and release heat, making it uncomfortable to walk barefoot on hot sunny days.)



### Non-slip ceramics

Outdoor ceramic tiles convey the cosy Mediterranean look that's all the rage in landscaping these days. Be sure to select dense tiles that are frost proof. The colour should pervade the entire thickness of the tiles, not just the surface, making tile damage much less apparent.

**Pros** Easy maintenance as with other ceramic tiles; non-slip surface (very important); attractive look.

**Cons** Meticulous installation requiring special adhesives and grouts; suited only for stable surfaces like concrete (wooden surfaces contract and expand during frost and thaw, potentially cracking the tiles); sealant is required to prevent water infiltration; more fragile than other surfacing materials. ■

Photos: iStockphoto®

### Cut tree branches, climbing plants and shrubbery

that are in contact with the building, blocking air intakes or outlets (air exchanger, dryer, etc.), or are too close to the heat pump. Be careful when working near power lines. To be fully aware of the risks and what type of work you're legally allowed to do, check out Hydro-Québec's website ([hydroquebec.com](http://hydroquebec.com)).

**Mow the lawn once the grass reaches 4½ inches** (11 to 12 centimetres), never cutting more than a third of its total length, so that you maintain a height of 3 inches (7.5 centimetres).



Mowing the lawn too closely will leave it vulnerable to dryness and weed infestation.

### Lock up those pieces of equipment and attachments

that can be dangerous to children; for example, the garden shed, where hazardous products like fuel and pesticides may be stored.

If you plan to install a ceiling fan, inside or outside, consult our article on the subject at

[caaquebec.com/touringextra](http://caaquebec.com/touringextra).

