

# PLAYHAVEN FARM LLC & GREEN BUILDING PROJECT



## GREENOVATION : DECK/PORCH

### PLEASE NOTE:

Everything included in "Greenovation : Deck/Porch" has been transposed directly from the website. That includes references to the PlayHaven Farm LLC and Green Building Project (PHF&GBP) website pages, external websites, links to documents, etc. Because of how quickly things change on the internet, there are NO links from this document.

### BACKSTORY (MAY 2011)

A back story is needed on this page.

The previous owner painted the floor/deck of the south porch dark green. When we bought the house, I knew that we would have to do something about that floor because:

- it's very slippery because it's painted,
- the dark color makes it hot to stand/walk/lay on,
- the heat radiating from the floor also adds heat to that side of the house (which is fine in the winter, but really bad in the summer),
- being a floor, it gets a lot of wear and that means alot of maintenance because the paint wears off exposing the wood to rain and sun.

Why not just strip off the paint, you say? You'd think that would be easy, but it's really not. Once a floor is painted, you may as well plan to paint it forever.

That being said, I searched for the appropriate paint to use. There are paints made to use on floors, but they are for enclosed spaces that may get some moisture, but not much. Some of these paints put a 'grit' into the paint to give a bit of traction (less slippery). The problem is these specialize paints are VERY EXPENSIVE.

I really didn't want to have to tear out the porch to fix this problem; but as a temporary fix until we could find an affordable solution, I purchased more of the Glidden Gripper paint (white) that is both a primer and sealer to at least cover the dark color and exposed wood. I added a Kwik-rete product made to put 'grit' into paint for floor applications. Supposedly, you can simply powerwash/scrape the old paint and the Gripper will adhere to both old paint and exposed wood. I'll tell you right now, that after painting it in the late summer... the Gripper paint was flaking off before the end of the year. We have had chips of that paint being tracked into the house by both our feet and the dog's feet/hair for the last year and a half. It was a complete waste of money and time. There is still some of the white paint on the floor and it has made a difference regarding the temperature and amount of light coming in the window.

I figured that I would have to sand and repaint the floor. So, I went to a rental shop to find out the cost of a floor sander and the particulars of about renting one and how to use it. I found out that I had to be sure there were no screws or nails or wood sticking out from the surface because that would get

into the works of the machine and ruin it. And since I really didn't want to have to buy a ruined piece of rental equipment, removing those obstacles became priority one.

Like so many other areas in this house, the deck has construction challenges (isn't that a nice way to put it?). Whoever put in the floor didn't care whether or not the screws were flush with the wood. So at least half of them stick up and we catch stuff on them alot. So finding out about the floor sander means having to remove those offending screws and replacing them AND sealing the holes so that they don't hold water.

I headed to Home Depot to get deck screws and extra bits for the drill (we figure there will be many getting ruined in the process of removing those old screws). And there I discovered a new product for rejuvenating old decks. It is called Deck Restore™ by a company called Synta. Basically, it is "painted" on with a roller and leaves a textured surface that looks great and appears to be exactly what we need for this deck. I've been talking with a gentleman from Synta about the possibility of Synta being a sponsor and providing enough of the Deck Restore™ to cover the south porch floor. Cross your fingers and toes... it looks promising!

### **LUMBER FOR RAISED BEDS - NO THE DECK! (MAY 2011)**

Things have changed a little bit, because last fall I was searching craigslist for lumber to make into raised beds for my vegetable (etc.) garden. I found 16 ft long, weathered 2x10s at an amazing price! They had been used on a commercial construction site to hold down tarps over materials through the winter and would have been sent to a landfill if they had not been pulled out of the dumpster. I was able to get 48 of them delivered to us.

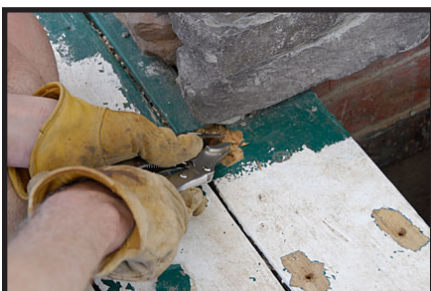
As we were loading them from the trailer into the old stable (translation: storage area), we realized they are a much better quality wood than what currently makes up our south porch floor. We decided to replace the flooring with the new wood and use the old floor wood to make the raised beds.

We also discovered that I don't have the strength to remove the old screws. So, the hubby has been removing screws and boards and replacing them with the new boards as time allows. It is very time consuming because we want to reuse the wood.

To date (mid-May 2011), he is a third of the way done and there is one raised bed in place and planted. There is another raised bed ready to be put in place and enough wood for several more.



Here is how the hubby is getting the wood from the old stable where it is stored up to the house. That is a 16 foot long 2x10 board of weathered pine (probably pine).



This picture explains the process of removing the screws.

First, the hubby uses a chisel to remove enough wood from around the screw head so that he can grip it with the vice grips. Then he unscrews it using the grips. He tried using the drill, but the screws are wedged in solid between the wood (seeing as how it has expanded due to moisture).

If he's lucky, the whole screw will come out; if not, the head breaks off which leaves the rest of the screw to be dealt with.



Once he has the screws (or the heads) out, he pries up each board. He discovered that the installers also used nails to hold the boards in place before screwing them down.

So after this, he turns each board over and hammers out those nails and unscrews the remains of any screws that are still in the wood.

The new boards are wider than the old boards. It takes about 1 new board to replace 3 old boards.

The supporting wood appears to be good and solid and we discovered that below the floor joists about 1/3 of the way out from the house are 4x4 wood 'beams' perpendicular to the joists.

This is also helping us to figure out where some electric lines are located/going to.

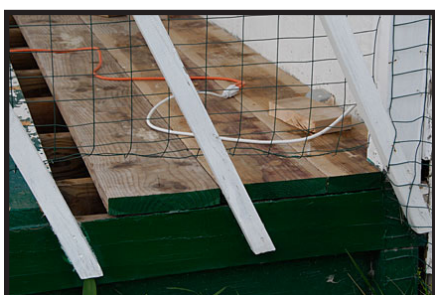


Here is the first board in place.



The threshold of the door is a bit above the level of the floor, so the hubby put treated wood there.

Notice how he uses a board to use between the new threshold and the hammer. This helps keep the new wood from being damaged and also keeps the other end from moving back out.



We won't be able to cover the ends with the Synta product, so we have to paint them.

I decided to leave the skirt of the deck the dark green color, so am using Rustoleum (oil based) paint to treat the ends of the wood.

You may be wondering about the wire? Since we have dogs and we don't want them going through the stiles, we attached 3 ft. garden fence along the inside of the rails. Plus we used it in the spots where the yard fence doesn't quite make it to the house.

Check back for more pictures. This project is taking longer than expected (as most projects tend to do... LOL).



## DECK REPLACED (12-28-11)



All the boards are now replaced and fastened! The hubby decided that a couple of the boards were too close together in spots (due to warping primarily) and used the circular saw to remove those bits.

We had rain on Winter Solstice Eve and woke up to find the exposed wood was not just wet but frozen as well. WOW, that is slippery! (One of our Newfoundland Dogs slipped and bounced down the 2 steps to the grass and we ended up making trips to the dog chiropractor and vet for pain killers. Expensive lesson learned.)

So, since we can't seal it until temps are consistently back above 55 degrees Fahrenheit; we have put old area rugs in the high traffic section to reduce the chance of injury.

You know, it looks SO nice, I've been tempted to simply seal it with a clear coat in the Spring.... but no, I really want to use this opportunity to show an alternative to replacing older weathered wood. Synta's DeckRestore it is!



## THEY SAY CHANGE IS GOOD (10-17-12)

What can you rely on? Change. Yep, that's really about all you can rely on... that things change. Yes, you read a bit of frustration in my writing. We have been ready to finish the south porch for MONTHS. I've been corresponding with Synta about getting the Deck Restore ... whether they are still interested (yes), how to get it here, etc. And it has simply been like pulling teeth to get them to (1) respond and (2) actually DO what they finally said they would do.

After months and MONTHS of this, I had enough. In August, I sent the last email and left the last voice message and told them we were going a different direction due to the delays and poor communication.

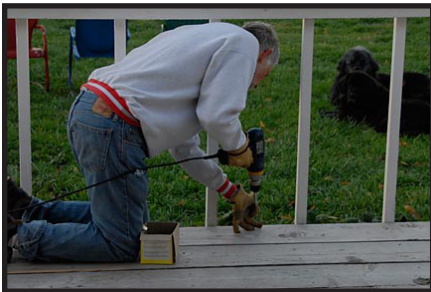
Luckily for us, I had done some research on how to clean the bare wood prior to applying anything and found this great website: Earthpaint (<http://www.earthpaint.net/>).

I did contact them about being a sponsor, but they were not really interested. Luckily for them, they still got my business.

We purchased two (2) gallons of their Lime Clean - Wood and Deck Cleaner. The square footage of our deck is a bit over 500, which one (1) would probably cover, but I'd rather play it safe and have enough in case it did not. The cost for using this VERY environmentally-friendly product is between two and three times what you would pay for a wood cleaner (depending on which product you compare it to).

We also purchased two (2) gallons of Rainforest Sealer for the same reason. Again, The cost for using this VERY environmentally-friendly product is between two and three times what you would pay for a penetrating sealant (depending on which product you compare it to).

The Earthpaint products arrived in very quick order (expected at least a week, it arrived in 3 days). Oh, and remember that gallon cans of paint are HEAVY, so we paid about \$65 to have them shipped to us. I was in a hurry to get them, so I forgot to search around to see if I could buy them locally. They do not list a supplier in the KC area.



There are a last few things to do before we can seal the deck wood.

Here you see the dogs supervising the hubby as he puts the last screws in the end board after removing the wire fencing that we usually have on the inside of the railing (to keep the dogs from jumping off the deck through them).

We also decided (last minute decision) that since the steps were painted (and would not get sealed) to simply replace that wood.



We did not have enough of the salvaged wood (in good enough shape anyway) to do this, so we purchased pressure treated wood at Home Depot. Those stairs cost under \$50... two (2) 2x12x8, two (2) 2x6x8, one (1) 2x8x8. The stringers under the new wood are fine and did not need replacing.

The old stair wood was more rotten than we knew... good thing we decided to replace it. I'll try to use what I can of it and the rest (after denailing it) will be left to finish the rotting process in an out of the way location on our property.

We rented a floor sander and the hubby used it to remove "cupping" on some of the boards. In case you are not familiar with that word, it describes a board that has bowed so that the edges are higher than the middle which makes it retain water longer.



The floor sander had a problem about 3/4 of the way through the deck (he worked from the outside edge at the rail first and made his way closer to the house). Luckily for us, the boards by the house were the best and had only minor areas that required sanding... which I did with the hand sander.

I applied the Lime Cleaner as instructed and it did a GREAT JOB! Scrubbing with the bristle brush was tiring (got help from the hubby), but all in all, very easy to use.

Here is a the sanded and cleaned deck ready to be sealed.

After cleaning the deck, you have to wait for the wood to dry completely. They recommend three (3) warm, dry days.

We cleaned it on Monday and as I type this on Wednesday, it is raining. So we will have to start the count over again before we can apply the sealant. That is OK! Our area needs about an inch of rain a week to get over the drought of the summer. The forecast shows that I should be able to apply the sealant on Sunday (10-21). Crossing fingers and toes.



TA-DA! Finally, the deck of the south porch is SEALED!!!

Even though we had a few drops of rain early Saturday morning, we also had LOTS of wind all day Saturday. So after looking at the week's forecast (and they predicted rain on Monday), I got up bright and early Sunday morning and put the Rainforest Sealer on with a roller on a handle extender.

I think I used the wrong nap roller ... figuring the floor is smooth to semi-smooth ... because only the top got covered, the edges between the boards didn't get much (if any).

Also, this wood has been out in the weather for at least 2 years, so it SOAKED in the sealer! The 2 gallons was just barely enough. And, yes, I did coat the stairs (verticals and risers). I also notice that those last three (3) boards closest to the house (that did not get sanded) did not absorb as well as the rest... the sealer seems to be sitting on top more and even though it is dry, it is tacky to the touch.

Lessons to remember for the next time.