



*Because salt water is abrasive, it scours the deck as it washes over it, wearing away the softer teak. This, and the constant torture of UV and rain, mean that after a decade or so of sailing, most decks will need to be lightly sanded, and the seams cut back and recaulked.*

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## Teak Tips

**P**actical Sailor solicited teak care tips from a few industry veterans, and we found that maintenance methods are like snowflakes: No two are alike.

John Neal—captain of *Mahina Tiare*, a Hallberg-Rassy 46 sail-training ship that has seen more than 117,000 miles—said that once a year, he washes the decks with a very soft, fluffy brush and a solution of fresh water, dish soap, and a little bleach. He lets it sit for 5 minutes or less, and then rinses the deck. Once or twice a year, he uses Boracal, a clear, odorless anti-fungal that doesn't bleach the wood but keeps mold at bay. (You can find it at GS Supply in Vancouver: 604/325-5422.)

Teak-deck manufacturer Teak Decking Systems cautions against using bleach on decks, as does Star brite Vice President Jeff Tieger. "Bleach, harsh laundry detergents, or other harsh household products can wear away teak," Tieger said. For regular maintenance, he suggests washing down the decks with fresh water and a mild boat soap. For bigger jobs, he recommends a teak cleaner or brightener. According to Tieger, even decks should be sealed with an oil or sealer to prolong the life of the teak and to protect the wood from getting the washboard look caused when the soft wood wears away.