

Fine Homebuilding®

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Plate-joiner decking hold-downs



When I worked as a carpenter, I reached a point where I hated building decks. I knew that whether I nailed or screwed down the decking, in a year the deck would creak when walked on and that probably at least one fastener would work its way out and become a trip hazard. I guess Harry Eberle, a builder from Califon, New Jersey, started to hate decks, too. But instead of just shaking his head and muttering at

the start of every deck job, he developed the Eb-Ty (888-438-3289), a polypropylene biscuit that spaces and holds down decking. A rigid spline that resembles the keel of a sailboat extends the length of the biscuit bottom. A countersunk screw hole bisects both the biscuit and its keel.

Slots aligned on joist centers are cut into both sides of the deck boards with a plate joiner. After the boards are slotted, a deck board's width of construction adhesive is squeezed onto each of the joists. The first board is set in the glue and fastened along its outer edge. The Eb-Tys slide into the board's slots and fasten to the joists with deck screws. More adhesive is placed, and the next board is slid onto the Eb-Tys. This continues until the last board is in place.

I haven't installed Eb-Tys myself, but I have seen a finished deck that was fastened with them. It didn't creak or pop as I walked across it. And with no visible fasteners, the deck had a real crafted look. Eb-Tys cost about 50¢ each.—A. E.

"Tools & Materials" continues on p. 134.